

In Gods loving arms

1. Under mother's wings.

Friendly shining rays of the setting sun fell on the small windows of mother Nijp's house. It had been a beautiful and colorful day, as only late autumn can give. Little Chris had just been called inside. He had played outside all day, but now it was time for bed. Behind the house, in the well kept garden, a tough girl of about sixteen years old was still doing some chores. She looked beautiful and well cared for and maybe that was why she was quite popular in the village. For some years now, Willempje had helped her mother with almost anything, but soon she would be leaving the parental house to live on her own. When she thought about that, tears would come into her eyes, but she made sure her mother never noticed. She certainly did not want to show it to her. She had enough problems already. About a year ago her father died. He had been ill for only a short while, when the big blow came. Her mother, Willempje and little Chris stayed behind! She had done all she could to comfort or unburden her mother. Pretty heavy sometimes, but she felt it was necessary. Therefore, she would have preferred staying home with them, but she also could not escape it; she had to carry on with her life too. She would move to the city, because she had found a job there and needed to get food on the table. Fortunately, the town was not far away from this lovely rural village, where she knew everyone and everything of her hand and where she would have preferred living forever. That's why she planned to be home very often, to be with her mother and Chris as much as possible, whom she loved so much!

Chris, how fond she was of him. That little rascal always knew how to cheer mother up with his little chitchat. He hardly talked about his dad, unless mother brought it up. Then he could say such nice things about him. Suddenly she reminded that the little guy was waiting for her inside. It was a habit that they played a little bit with each other before bedtime. She always enjoyed it so much as they frolicked and when in the end he rolled over the ground of pleasure, she could tell that even mom at that moment totally forgot her grief. She hurried inside, where Chris was already waiting for her. She felt that this evening she would even give more of herself than usual. Maybe it was because she had just thought about her upcoming departure from home. Soon, the daily games with her brother would all be over. "To bed Chris", mother said. Chris obeyed, because he was already old enough to listen. Willempje brought her brother upstairs to the attic, where his sleeping place was near her bed. She sang him his little lullaby and kissed him goodnight. Then she suddenly realized how happy they actually were together. Would they ever be more happy than they were with mom right now? She could hardly imagine.

Willempje would have liked to stay forever in that cozy village where everything attracted her so much. When she thought of the city, it was with quite some reluctance. Now she did not know it yet, but that stay in the big city would become an eternal blessing for her, by God's guidance. Ms. Nijp was a good and caring mother, however what she did not own herself, she could not pass on to her children. So the children were raised incredulously, while it wasn't that mother Nijp was totally irreligious or indifferent. Not at all, she very much could appreciate some Christian practice. But she never heard about God's grace, which you can receive through Jesus Christ. Her children would hear of that first, albeit in very different ways. For her daughter that time was about to come soon. After she moved to the city, God brought her into contact with a group of Christians and, for the first time, she heard from their mouth about the lost state that mankind is in. They pointed her to the transience of existence and to be serious about eternity. When at last she was told about the gospel by a travelling evangelist, full light turned on in her soul and true happiness was what she found.

In Gods loving arms

Chris stayed behind, alone with his mother. He was lacking nothing and free as a bird he lived his carefree childhood. Until the big day came that Chris had to go to school for the first time and the question was for who it was more difficult that day, for him or for his mother. But 'you get used to everything' and so Ms. Nijp got accustomed to being alone in the house during the hours that Chris was in school. Those hours were very important, preparing her for the years that Chris would be gone permanently. And finally that day came, sooner then she had realized, when Chris indeed left home for good. As he just finished his school, he ended up in a bakery, where he learned as an apprentice and was mastered. He remained there only briefly, because he wanted to go to the big city, where his sister also had worked for a couple of years. After that she even had moved to the capital of the province. And that's where he wanted to go too, to Leeuwarden, because it had to be a very good place to stay. And so it happened that Chris went from one bakery to another and from one village to the next until he, as a twenty year old young man, ended up in a prosperous village close to the capital. His heart had drawn him there.

II. Under the red flag.

"Dijkstra, tonight there is a meeting, do you come too?" "Meetings, meetings, always that meetings! Man, in the evening my legs hurt so much... that I am much more willing to sit at the fire smoking my pipe, then to first walk for half an hour, attend a meeting and not arrive back home until the middle of the night. "No, Nijp, I 'm just not such a full-blooded socialist like you. They'll do fine without me". "If we all thought about it that way, what would become of our ideals? It's about the "cooperation Excelsior" and we must continue to realize the importance of the matter. Excelsior higher!, remember. Think about the battle we have to fight, Dijkstra!", Chris Nijp spoke passionately. It sounded like he had received his fluency from the leader of the political party he belonged to. "Higher, higher", growled Dijkstra, who was way over fifty years old. "It's nice to have ideals, but a man must also consider his body. And therefore, I do not know if I'll be there tonight. Is there something special going to happen?" "Taking your body into account is good, but not that much!", Nijp replied witty. "And what we'll discuss tonight; there is an election to fulfill a vacant position for a membership in the board!" "That definitely will be assigned to Chris Nijp then", Dijkstra laughed.

That same evening the meeting of the department of the union of workers in chocolate and confectionery "took place. The attendance was not disappointing. It looked like these man were very motivated for their ideal, the fight against capitalism and all the many things that went wrong in society. Their work for the day was over, and they were willing to sacrifice the evening hours. Dijkstra had actually arrived. "There is an important meeting tonight", he had said to his wife, "and to be honest I do like Chris Nijp to be chosen. He is a convinced SDAP'er. There hides a good lobbyist in that man. He can speak quite well and shows a lot of zeal for the cause. You should have heard him this morning; it looked like he gave a speech." Ms. Dijkstra didn't reply. She totally had no concern for these things. She would also not participate in the demonstration on the first of May, not at all! Chris Nijp on the other hand would not let go of a such a meeting for anything in the world. It wasn't any different this night. He loved his wife and would have liked playing with the children a bit longer, but it was time to go. He looked back, smiled at his wife and even ran back to kiss her goodbye, and then it really was time to go. Eventually he still had to hurry to finally arrive just in time. Chris Nijp, totally devoted he was for the good cause! If one may had had the right to count on the trust of his members then it would have been him. And that trust did clearly show that night in the outcome of the vote. Dijkstra looked in the direction of the elected. Had he not predicted that it would go like

In Gods loving arms

this? And wasn't that the reason he came for tonight? Nijp himself was still surprised by the result of the election. Certainly, he surely was looking forward to start in a board function, but he still wasn't sure yet if he was the right person for the job. He weighed his words well when he spoke his acceptance speech. He promised to even be more committed to the association and the social and political issues of the party. A figurehead, a leader he would be! At home he would try to inspire his wife even more, for she had to be standing next to him. She would have to sacrifice a lot by often staying alone at home, when he would be on his way trying to win people for the things that were so important to him. He was convinced that he was on the right track! Who could have any doubt about that? Everyone just had to be won for the cause and there was no one to be left behind, when it was up to him. Fully dedicated he was... And yet Chris Nijp had a blindfold on then, he would understand later and then would look back on this time with total different feelings; as a period in which he took into account everyone and everything, except the things that really matter for time and eternity. God would come into his life! But Chris had no idea what would happen!

It was a strange combination; a Bible for children together with socialist propaganda and yet it was normal at Nijp's home. The reason: Nijp received a children's Bible through the mail from his sister. They had no clue about the purpose of it and they did not ask about it either, but they had been reading it already and they had to admit that they were quite fascinated by it. That much-maligned Bible was still not so bad after all. It even included striking historical stories. For example about Moses, who stood up for his oppressed brethren in Egypt. So centuries ago there already was social injustice. Even then there were men that wrote: "We stand up for the oppressed". It told about the rich who, in all their luxury forgot to look after the poor. About Pilate, who treated a righteous man unjust, so that he had to die on a cross. Martyrs for a sacred right also existed in those days! Chris therefore thought that the Bible might come in handy for socialism. That's why he would even read it more at home, together with his wife, so he could use it as a weapon in his fight for socialism. He would prove that the Bible was on his side! The Bible clearly hated injustice, warned for the wealthy and protected the poor, and that was exactly what he stood for himself. So that book would become Chris his manual. But he wouldn't have thought that the same Bible would also condemn him!

Condemn? Was Chris Nijp such a bad person, perhaps more so than any other? If someone would have asked Chris that question, while he was so zealously fighting for the realization of his 'utopia', he would have reacted with surprise. Then he would have delicately pointed out what he all did for the good cause. So, was there nothing to complain about then? Of course not, he certainly was not perfect. But who was? Nobody is. He had some doubts in his mind whether the realization of his ideals would ever be achieved, but that was something totally different. In general, he was no worse or better person than anybody else. No, to his own opinion, Chris Nijp certainly wasn't to be condemned at all. His wife and children were crazy about him; his friends praised him for his loyalty. He gave each person what he rightfully deserved. What could he do more, unless one would expect the impossible from him? But what he didn't realize was that he, an in itself 'good man', took no account of 'sin'. He *had* eye for 'sins', however mostly those of others. But what came from the wickedness of his own heart, he paid no attention to. He did not know about Gods holiness and therefore it would have been impossible for any man to convince Chris Nijp of his own sinful condition. And that's why God would do that, without anyone's help!

In Gods loving arms

III. The first rays of the upcoming day.

It was a quiet day for Chris Nijp, now Dijkstra had a few days off due to private circumstances . Nijp liked to have people around him and was always in for some fun. But the boys were gone and therefore Nijp inspected the flour attic once again. He wanted everything neatly organized. Empty meal-sacks were usually stacked in the same corner. First they were hung out to dry properly and then they were beaten. That way they would last longer. Nijp loved to carefully carry out his work. Although it was for the Cooperation, he liked working as if it was for himself. That's how it should be, he felt. Therefore it was not surprising that he was very well regarded by his immediate superiors. If others would 'cut corners', then Nijp was anything but easy on them. Then he would step in to it and, if he thought it was necessary, acted very firmly. At that occasion, he often empowered his words by abusing the name of God. Swearing was something Chris did not notice anymore, because he cursed at every single opportunity. But if he really was on fire, he swore so terribly that even his friends were impressed, and they were quite used to something. But today it was very quiet. Nobody put a slightest obstacle in his way. He was there all by himself.

On the large stock attic, where Chris was checking his things, it was very hot that day. In the morning he had already noticed it, when he was loading up heavy sacks of corn. But in the afternoon it became really hot and almost unbearable to work. Without thinking Chris looked at the large open door. He wiped sweat from his forehead and looked at the western sky, where the sun was still shining, but in a few hours would sink into the horizon as a dark red globe. It was a clear blue sky and there was no cloud to be found, but still Chris didn't trust it. There definitely would be a thunderstorm, he thought. All sorts of thoughts went through his head. What a long time ago it was, that he had left his birth-place. There he had enjoyed his carefree childhood. It suddenly got to him very vividly; How Willempje seeded flowers with him in front of the house and how they played together, before he went to bed. Willempje, she was married long ago and had children herself since long. He had not seen her quite a while! Chris suddenly came to his senses. He was not there on the flour-loft to daydream. There was still plenty of work left and even though it was very sweaty and warm, it still had to be done! So, Chris got himself together by saying: "Come on boy, back to work!" . And while he said that he picked up a large wooden crate.

Small causes can have big effects ; When lifting the last coffin, a large splinter got under a nail of Chris, causing severe pain. The poor guy stamped his feet with pain, while he cursed terribly like he had never sworn in his whole life. He raged and cursed as hard as he could. Suddenly in that lonely place and by his own behavior, Chris became aware of all the cursing and all the swearing he had ever done. It was like all that curses attacked him together as one. Suddenly it overwhelmed him in a way he had never experienced. Often he had cursed God and often in a terrible way, whether there was a reason for it or not. But it was just like that same God that he had cursed, all of a sudden stood there right before him. He had heard of God once, but he had never served him, let alone honored him. Suddenly he felt very small in the presence of that great and almighty God. He even got very frightened and fear "squeezed his throat". His heart began pounding violently. There was no one with him, and there was no one that threatened him, yet he was as scared like a child! And in his solitude he exclaimed: "O God, I acknowledge that You are here and that You exist, and I acknowledge that I have sworn to You. Who am I compared to You? What should I do? I've heard of people bowing down. God, I bow down here before You!" And between the flour-sacks on the floor,

In Gods loving arms

Chris Nijp knelt down for God.. And the angels in heaven saw it and were very pleased! God had started the work of grace in Chris his heart! And He would finish it..

These were sacred moments for Chris Nijp there on the flour-loft, with his head down on the floor, like he couldn't bow any deeper for that great God, who had made Himself known to him. Nijp stood up. He was surprised en felt confused. He thought it was all a bit miraculous and strange. What would happen now? He didn't dream it! He did not understand what had happened , but he knew very well that this was not a vision, but sober reality. Nothing could make that fact undone. He was quite sure of it. Nijp suddenly had a song in his heart. It had been a long time since he had sung those words, but the words just came to his mind: "Lord , make known your ways ." And what came next was clearly applicable to him ; " Make it known to me by your Word and Spirit." So much had happened that had dishonored God! What should happen now? Nijp was a solid man, certainly not half-hearted. He immediately felt that there would be struggle, because from now on he also would reckon with God. He did not really feel glad or happy, but he was convinced by God himself! There he heard the engine of the truck. The boys were back and the work asked for his full attention again. He quickly ran downstairs. Nijp was not a daydreamer. He was a real go-getter!

The next day, the first "fruit" of God's work would be seen with him. He himself, had no idea! There was a spiritual process that had started, and could impossibly be stopped. Nijp was busy, working hard in the bakery with a couple of his buddies. It was the time that the rye-bread had to be baked. One of the man had some setbacks in his work. It all just did not work out so well for the man and he became a bit rebellious. Then he cursed, but no one else noticed it, because they were used to it for long. However Chris did notice it for the first time in his life, and it cut right through his soul. And although he was known for not minding to swear himself, he addressed his friend by saying: "will cursing make things easier, Jelle?" "No, of course not", he replied, "and you know that like no one else". "Well, why don't you stop cursing then", Chris quietly said. And of course everyone had heard that! "What has happened to Chris?", one of his mates said." "Are you joining the Salvation Army?", a second replied, "We'll see about that. You only have to get really mad and then you should hear yourself..." "It's a whim.. it will pass..", concluded a third. Nijp said nothing and the work continued. And that day no one heard him curse, although they paid extra attention to it. And never in his life he cursed again, not even a single time..

IV. Longing for God, from the grief.

" Willempje married long time ago and has children herself", Chris had thought on that hot afternoon, when he was looking out for storm clouds. Indeed, Willempje indeed had married several years ago. And because she was already a believer in her girlhood, she had deliberately chosen to remain a virgin and that plan had succeeded with God's help. So, it was the best day of her life, when Jan Roest asked her to marry. He was the man she really loved! It still had sounded very serious in her ears that 'marriage', but what Jan continued to say had won her heart. He blushed when he asked her, but he did not ask her to just be friends. No, she had to know, that he wanted to commit himself to her for life! He had a feeling that she was the woman God had predestined for him. Not that he was in a hurry or something. He really wanted to discuss everything with her first, but she had to realize that he asked her to be his wife and that he was very serious. Shy and with a pounding heart she

In Gods loving arms

had placed her hand in his and had said 'yes'. Filled with hope they started a new chapter in their book of life, a chapter with a golden rim! Not because there were no worries, for even a lot of extra 'clouds' had appeared. But for them behind that clouds 'the sun' was shining. Their hearts rested in God's love!

Why was it then that Chris had such a strong desire to see his sister again. A desire that he could hardly suppress. It had been a long time since they met each other. Last time it certainly had not been easy for Chris. A night and a part of the next morning he had spent with his sister and brother-in-law, and he had witnessed a truly Christian family life. Jan preceded in prayer at the table and had read aloud from the bible, like it was the most natural thing in the world. However he had not liked the conversations. That's why at some point he had been very reluctant to leave and to reach for the nearest train station to go back home again. When sitting in the train compartment, he thought about what he had experienced and came to the conclusion that it was nothing for him. O certainly, they had been nice and very hospitable. They had done everything they could. But that religion... it stood in their way. It was as if they had no real contact., like they lived in total different worlds. Even if they were not talking about religion, it was noticeable. Quite strange that religion, he thought. So, why was it that he now, in spite of all that, yet had such a strong desire to see his sister. "Man, then you should go!", his wife said to him. Chris couldn't be stopped anyway.

Chris had taken a view days off to visit that little village where his sister lived so happily. It was in the middle of the summer and everything was blooming and floral fragrances filled the air. From the youngest to the oldest, all gave him a warm welcome. Because of the beautiful weather they would only come in to eat. The rest of the time he was romping outside with the children or getting together in the garden. The atmosphere was very relaxed. Jan Roest still had a paint job that had to be done, but because Chris was there he had made an exception and had laid down his brush. He wanted to enjoy now. And they had had done so to the fullest. They had been fishing and catching 'eel' and had an unforgettable nightly walk, when they had talked about almost anything. Chris had noticed at that occasion that Jan was certainly not stupid, but beside that also very pious. One time they almost even had a collision. Chris had started about politics and had talked fiery about the great leader of his party. Jan on the contrary, had taken the opportunity to say something about 'eternal things' and Jesus Christ, his Savior. After that a huge silence had set in. As a result they had walked behind each other for quite a while, although there had been enough space on the path for both of them. But Chris did not want to walk beside him. And so it was on the path of life.. There would be a time when all would be different, but unfortunately Jan would not experience that.

"Jan and Willempje have something we miss", Chris said when he came home to his wife. I've been there for a few days now and the kids are just like ours. There's also a cheerful mood in their house. But still there is something they have, that we don't. I don't know exactly how to say it, but I have been thinking for a moment: "I wish I was like them". A Bible we have too, at least the children's Bible, but I guess that practically comes down to the same thing." "Well, I'm glad you had such a good time", his wife said, but everything in moderation please. There is a fair in the village today.

In Gods loving arms

Shall we go and see it?". "It's fine to me when the children go.. Here's ten dollars Yde, then you can have some fun or buy something you like. But your sister should go with you." His sister Trijntje, everyone called her Tine, was a year older than Yde; she was about eight years old. It was quite remarkable that Chris did not want to go together with his children. Equally inexplicable it was, that the blond eight year old Tine rather liked to stay at home than to go to the fair with Yde. Of course coercion was not exercised, and so that year it was for the first time that the family Nijp couldn't be found on the fair. What was going on with them? Was it because of his visit to the family Roest? Was it because he walked around with a feeling that something was missing? God knew what it was and He would continue to work!

All over the country merciless flew grasped around, and once it captured someone, it would not let go off that easily anymore. Even in the small village, where Roest had his thriving painting business, the flu epidemic had penetrated. The disease, that no one seemed to spare, also had gotten hold of the Roest family. The disease struck the elderly and small children, but especially strong young men were hit. Men in the prime of their lives got 'weak as little children' and had to pay for it, often even with their lives. The Roest family was in a terrible state. Jan, as head of the family, who couldn't be missed at all, conducted a battle against death. Would God not be merciful? Wouldn't he listen to the prayers that were sent up by 'God's children', who didn't want to miss Jan, and by whom they had received so many spiritual blessings. Willempje's heart was broken. When she looked at the man she loved as herself, and who definitely couldn't be missed, it all became too much for her. If somehow she had not found 'rest' in God's father love, she wouldn't have pulled off and she would have been drowned in her own grief. Especially when death 'entered in' and actually claimed Jan for itself!

Autumnal gloomy mist filled the streets of the capital. On the roads and in the gardens, the leafless trees made a very sad impression. No ray of sunshine broke through the clouds. It seemed like everything was mourning. From the branches big drops were falling, as if they were crying over the losses due to the terrible flu epidemic. Chris Nijp was staring in front of himself. A few big teardrops had fallen on the funeral card which he held in his hand. So it was really true. Last night the overwhelming news had come. Willempje, his beloved sister and mother of a whole host of young children, was a widow now. His wife had cried out her grief in silence. He had wanted to bear it bravely, but he had not succeeded. He had screamed with grief over this great loss. He had liked Jan. The kids thought it was very strange and had looked at each other as if they were saying: "Why are mom and dad so sad?" The funeral card was still lying on the table and Chris grabbed him again and looked at it now for the third time. In silence he read: "Today, after a short but severe illness, our beloved man and caring father passed away, in His Lord and Savior... " Jan had died!

Would the death of Jan Roest be like a seed that has to fall into the earth and die to bare much fruit. Would the death of this sincere witness of Christ be a blessing to others, just like his life had been? Would Chris Nijp be 'harvested' now Jan Roest had died? Chris was sad and that sadness would turn into a desire to God! These questions were not in the mind of the totally defeated widow. She could only think of her great loss! But at the same time, this woman also thought about the joy her husband was experiencing now. Heavenly joy he had obtained ! Jan himself had once so rightly said at the grave of a brother (in faith) who suddenly passed away: "Our brother is now with Christ, and that is by far the best.. Let us think about that a lot." And now his own words became a precious legacy to her. Her husband would be with Christ now! Unspeakable words he would hear in God's

In Gods loving arms

paradise. And she had to think about a couple of lines from a poem, she had often sung with her dear husband:

"Oh, how utterly delightful ...
... It will be in heaven ! "

Chris Nijp defeatedly arrived at the auditorium of the cemetery. How reluctant he was to meet his sister under these most sad circumstances. Her husband would be carried to the grave, while the majority of her children still laid sick in bed! What surprised him most was that Willempje was so still in her grief, and so supernatural calm. Where did that calmness come from? She was also an ordinary person, wasn't she? Everything he saw and experienced in that funeral parlour cut him through the soul! At the graveyard he would even be more amazed. The first speaker stepped forward and turned to all the attendees with the request to sing a song at the grave. Sing?, Chris thought. Are they crazy? Singing at a dead person? He thought it to be very strange, also because someone in charge just had spoken: "Those who are in Christ, have escaped from the violence of death; they live, even if they are dead!" and "Because I live, you also will live, the Savior said". Chris didn't understand it at all. Jan was dead and they just said that he was still alive? And then lustily sung words sounded over the graveyard: "Head up, heart up, down here it is not be found.. true life is where one looks upon Jesus..." So, here they were clearly not thinking about death but about life instead. How was that possible? It didn't seem normal to him. Yes, they also talked about death, but apparently not about a normal death, but a death as a result from sin. And about Jesus Christ, who died Himself on a cross, and then defeated death... Chris listened to all this with concentrated attention! How strange it all was and yet ... he had to admit it; also so beautiful !

"Chris, boy! How are you doing?" This question came, most of all, from his own sister and what would he have to say on that? Even now she thought of him and not herself. Also strange! "I cannot imagine how you will manage on your own with so many children.. ", Chris replied. And although that was not an answer to her question, Willempje gladly said: "If God had not been there, then Jan never could have taken care of me and the children. God always made it happen and made sure Jan had work. That same God is still my God and Father. And moreover, widows and orphans have a special place in God's Word and in His heart. I will not eat a crumb less, if God does not want it." That answer made Chris very small. He did not know what to say anymore and therefore it was time to leave. Chris shook her hand and said goodbye by saying with a moved voice: "I wish you all the best Willempje!" Then she still added him the following words: "Boy, I hope you got something out of this..". And he certainly did. And he would get yet another thing, because when he went to the train station, a young man, who had been present at the funeral, accompanied him. That man spoke to him: "I myself cannot give it to you. If God had given me to be more well-spoken, then I would have been able to say much more, but now I can only say: "Man, repent to God!"

In Gods loving arms

After such a funeral, you can imagine how it was for Chris to arrive back home. He was totally confused. It was like he had come in touch with eternal things, and that everything he had build up so far sank into nothingness. Like he no longer cared for it at all. He found his wife heartbroken, and she wanted to hear from him soon about Willempje and the children, and how the funeral had been like. Chris quickly answered her desire, but then started talking about the 'thing that kept him so busy', although he still could not describe it very well. And then he told about this man who had joined him on his journey and how he had briefly said that he needed to repent to God. And that he then had to admit to himself that he actually was a very unhappy person. There had been no exaggeration or excitement in the words of the man. He had noticed that it was just a spontaneous expression of a man who was genuinely happy because of his faith. A pure and real utterance of a truthful and serious belief of someone, who before had obvious been a 'man of the world'. Maybe that's why that only short summon to repent, had yet such a great and undeniable impact on him. It was an arrow from God's quiver, that had hit its target. Chris spoke.... Chris cried... He and his wife spoke seriously for hours. It was not until in the middle of the night before they went to bed. They spent the night in sleeplessness. Everything was still dark to them. Then the new day came. The couple Nijp was glad to greet the morning sun again. In their hearts it was not light and both were totally exhausted. That was because their bodies had not received the necessary refreshment from the sleep and also because a different fatigue was added, which was even more serious than that of the body. That was because they did not know Him yet, who said: "Come unto Me all who are sick and weary and I will give you rest.. " Little was spoken when they were having breakfast. Everything went on auto-pilot that day. Chris had to go to the factory and his wife had to meddle with the kids. That day, Chris was more quiet than ever, and his otherwise so cheerful wife did her normal activities in silence. Both were glad when the work of the day was finished and they were back together again in the evening. Would they be talking about the same things now? Would they still be able to keep silent about it? Their heart was so full of it. They felt so unhappy, and they could not explain it. Yet it was certain to them, that they both could become happy through just those things that they had heart about. If only they would understand and if only they got a bit more light on the matter. And that is what God should do!

Because what exactly brought Mr. de Jager to their home just that same night. Was it God's work, like in the beginning when He spoke: "Let there be light!?" Did He also want to bring light to this home, to light up their hearts with the 'sun of mercy'? Chris was happy that he could invite Mr. de Jager in, who he heard speak about the love of Christ the previous day. They spend the whole evening together, talking about the gospel and the grace of God. To the question that he asked him if he believed in God, Chris told him what had happened on the flour loft and how he, from that day on, had never cursed again. Then it was made clear to him by the late visitor, how he, being unjust and a sinner, could be reconciled with God by the death of His Son. Chris and his wife were then both led to the cross and they knelt down in deep remorse over their lost life 'at the feet' of Him, who had loved the sinner so much, that He gave His own life for him... And when the messenger departed, Chris and his wife worshipped God together and went on their knees to thank God for His unspeakable gift of love to them. They both cried from happiness about the salvation that they owned now. It had become light! Finally. Lovely bright light! A deep joy filled up their hearts.

Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. That also applied to the Nijp family. Chris felt overjoyed. At home he would let himself be taught from the Bible, while he also immediately got into contact with other believers. At his work he testified whenever there was a suitable moment. "A dog barks when

In Gods loving arms

his boss touches him", Calvin ever said. Would the followers of Jesus be silent when it was about their Master? Through his behavior Chris also got a lot of mocking and taunting to endure. It was just like the Savior had said: "A servant is not greater than his Lord, if they have persecuted me, they will persecute you." Chris quickly earned the nickname "Nazarene", and in this he shared in the suffering of His Lord. Although it was unjust, he was reproached with 'improperly selling his God'. Chris looked 'upwards' for strength and outcome and it did not last long before he had found another job. This change only would be short-lived, for as he had barely started his new job, he had a fatal accident. He then became totally unable for the job. Incomprehensible the path became to them then, a path of physical pain and trial of faith. But the love of Christ was so dear to them, above all things, that they were bearing their sadness in silence and in spite of everything, they continued to trust in the Lord. And God would take care of them... Miraculously even!

Chris Nijp was sitting quietly in the living room. It was a strange moment for him. He used to work at this time of the day. Now he was disabled and in anticipation of what God would do next. God knew that he would have to provide in a completely different way in his own livelihood than before, in the past. God was his loyal and caring Father. In that way Chris was sitting there and the most important thing was that all was quiet inside. He thought of a verse: "I give my future, path and destiny over to my Father's care." As a husband and wife they were discussing what needed to be done now. Was it possible to start a small business and keep some goods in stock? Chris would try to engage with a company, that was a train journey of several hours away. He wanted to leave the next day. 'Holding still' was never something he had liked, because he was known as a hard worker. The next morning Chris took off with good expectations. There was still travel money, but he did not know that he left his wife with almost no money in her purse. She had not said anything about it, because she did not want to burden her husband. Without notice, she looked at the wall next to the mantelpiece, where she read the for her so famous words: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.."

Filled with expectations Ms. Nijp looked forward to the arrival of her husband. What news would he bring? The outcome would probably be near, because the need was at its highest. And the need would not exceed the Helper, would it? It was already dusk, and Chris was still not at home. The hours passed by for this waiting woman and in her heart she considered how happy they both had become, now they knew the Lord as their Good Shepherd. They enjoyed God's Father love. The way ought to be steep and the problems many, but still they were salvaged for time and eternity. A song of thanksgiving came to her heart! The front door opened. Chris came in and the children ran out to meet their father. With one look she tried to find out how the day had been. Immediately she saw that his efforts had been in vain. She would be careful not to show her disappointment as it must had been hard enough for Chris. She longed for the moment the children were in bed. Then they would be able to discuss everything with each other. Together they had been through so many joys and sorrows. Together they would also cope with this, in God's power. That was what this brave woman deliberated in her heart.

In Gods loving arms

A new day had dawned . The previous day had brought no solution. How would it go today? It was two o'clock in the afternoon. The children were in school. Chris had noticed to his dismay that the last money that morning had been spent on the meal they had eaten thankfully. What should they do now? To make known their needs to people? If God wanted it, they would certainly do so. But they did not prefer that. And so, they went on their knees like two intimately connected souls, and simply made known their need to their Heavenly Father. A few moments later the afternoon post arrived with a registered letter that could be picked up at the post office. Chris quickly put on his coat to receive the letter. He looked at the clock. It was ten minutes past two. Came the answer to their prayer that soon? The writer of the letter sent about € 5000, with the remark that God had blessed him , and "that this amount probably might be used to start a small business." God wanted to use this money as a blessing to His service. And the money has been blessed and well used by Chris and his wife in all their work for the Lord. And Chris and his wife lived on without worry, resting in God's loving arms!