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An Explanation Of The Selection Of The Contents For This Issue

It is one thing to write in the abstract about "brotherly love" and about "obeying the powers that be" because they are "ordained of God." Some readers may not make a practical application of theoretic ideas on those subjects.

As readers know, we consider prevailing ideas among many Christians about *brotherly love* and *powers ordained by God* to be unscriptural, illogical and pernicious. But the assumption of readers may be that it is some distant "heretic" or pseudo-Christian whom we consider to be guilty, but that it cannot be members of a man's own group (in this case the Christian Reformed church*).

Simply for the purpose of making the problems (about which we are writing) realistic to our readers and relevant to everyday practical affairs, we are referring in this issue to a number of writings recently published by others. We believe that some of those writings contain serious errors although they are being promoted in the name of the Christian religion.

This issue is then a temporary interruption in our main presentation. We are loitering on our way in order to attempt to neutralize ideas which are in the air. Our ideas cannot live in such an atmosphere; those other ideas will not be able to live in our atmosphere.

First, we have a short follow-up article on Talleyrand and Groen in order to show that Talleyrand fathomed a basic general principle; Groen merely made a limited application. The end result of both in the particular instance is the same.

Then we turn to the subject of *coercion*. The right to *coerce* is accepted by men well known in the Christian Reformed church. That acceptance of coercion we consider a basic wickedness.

Then we turn to a little problem of ethics, namely, on how to conduct the controversy among us. We have a short article on

*This happens to be the denomination to which the writer belongs. It would have been irregular for him to have mentioned any other denomination by name. He does not believe that most denominations are any better in these matters than the Christian Reformed. The church named is mentioned merely for illustrative purposes.

"Our Dutch Brethren Are Cutting Us Up." We could write a similar article entitled "Our American Brethren Are Cutting Us Up."

We ourselves do not mind being "cut up." We are against a peace based on silence about wickedness and folly.

We do not think that people outside our milieu (group) will think less of us because we tell each other what we think.

We are unsympathetic to those who cry, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.

We tolerate complacently much of the anger and abuse directed toward us because we realize that our opponents cannot yet fully understand our basic premises.

F.N.

Wherein Talleyrand Was Greater Than Groen van Prinsterer

In the October issue we referred to the basic agreement that exists in the ideas of Talleyrand and Groen (see page 298). In a brief note we wish to emphasize that agreement, by the paradoxical method of calling attention to the difference in their thought.

Groen stressed the existing hard-won *rights* of citizens as defense mechanisms against government tyranny. Those "rights," once they had been wrested from the government were, for Groen, inviolate. Groen emphasized *possession* of rights already acquired. He never stated the more basic principle on how those rights had been or were to be *acquired*. Clearly, there was no "root" to Groen's rights. Those rights were flowers that were beautiful and untouchable in maturity. But, for Groen, there had been no legitimate germination, sprouting, or growth. Over these prerequisite processes there is for Groen a dark cloud of suspicion of evil, namely, a rebellion against the "powers that be" which are "ordained of God."

Talleyrand was a more profound political thinker. Whereas Groen found only the flower, Talleyrand discovered the whole plant on which the flower must grow if it is to exist. That plant is the "right of opposition."* Groen, misunderstanding the Apostle Paul in Romans 13 was afraid of the idea of the "right of opposition." The "right of opposition" apparently seemed to Groen to be a violation of a statement in the Heidelberg Catechism which Groen undoubtedly devoutly believed, namely, that all men ought to "bear patiently with [a government's] weaknesses and shortcomings, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand." (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day XXXIX.)

Groen's "rights" which he considered priceless were nothing more than the specific fruit of past, specific "oppositions."

Let us now contrast the ideas of Talleyrand and of Groen.

<u>Groen</u>	<u>Talleyrand</u>
1. Groen thought in terms of existing, historical rights.	1. Talleyrand thought in terms of the origin of rights in a dynamic society.
2. Groen thought in terms of specific rights obtained by <i>past</i> opposition.	2. Talleyrand thought in terms of a general and ever-present right of opposition.
3. Groen was reluctant to make a claim to a right not already admitted by government, because such a claim would be an apparent violation of Romans 13.	3. Talleyrand boldly stated his principle of the right of opposition, even to men who in their own hearts were opposed to the idea of the right of opposition, such men as the leaders of the French Revolution, Napoleon, Louis XVIII, and other crowned heads of Europe.

*The granting of the right of opposition *alone* does not make a government legitimate. There are other requirements which we shall specify later.

4. Groen never realized that his interpretation of Romans 13 involved a violation of the Sixth Commandment, namely, a concession that a government had a certain *power*, that is, the *general* right to coerce.
5. Groen's government would involve a generally *coercive* society, in which some coercion was restricted and restrained by certain specific rights.
6. Groen restricted the requirement of "meekness" to citizens, and did not apply the principle to governments.
7. Groen did not dare *always* to follow the rule of obeying God rather than men.
4. Talleyrand, although a renegade churchman, clearly understood that it is a basic principle of morality that *all coercion is evil* except the limited coercion permitted to restrain evil. (See the October, 1955, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.)
5. Talleyrand's society would be a *voluntary* society (in the full and unrestricted sense) in harmony with the Sixth Commandment.
6. Talleyrand applied the requirement of "meekness" to everybody — governments, and government officials as well as to citizens.
7. Talleyrand in regard to government never failed to follow the principle that *coercion* is evil, and he realized that the *right* of opposition was a basic acknowledgment that coercion is evil and should be annulled by the right of peaceful opposition.

The founders of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM are *very* great admirers of Groen. Basically he was reaching to grasp liberty. But his thought, unfortunately, was shackled by a misinterpretation of Romans 13. As a result Groen saw only a few great trees of liberty (certain rights); Talleyrand saw the whole forest of liberty.

F.N.

Dr. Dirk Jellema On The Idea That Coercion Is Moral

Is It True That "Blessed Are The Meek"?

Our readers know that we consider a "union shop" to be in violation of Biblical morality, because it is contrary to the Sixth Commandment, Thou shalt not kill, which means in the accepted sense it has had from the time of Moses, Thou shalt not coerce (force your will on your neighbor).

In the New Testament the same idea is expressed by Christ "positively," namely, Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5). The term "meek" does not, in our opinion, refer to weaklings or cowards, but to people who have relinquished a claim to *forcing* their neighbors or *coercing* them, and instead are resigned to relying on *persuasion*, and who permit *disagreement* or opposition, and who rely on *reasonableness* as did William the Silent, Prince of Orange, who (according to Groen van Prinsterer) was "full of powerful reasons why" for doing things; this great prince was, in our opinion, "meek" in the Biblical sense, that is, he was prepared to live by the Sixth Commandment.

Four Kinds Of Shops

A "union shop" should be defined. We shall do that by listing four kinds of "shops," using the term shops in the sense of manufacturing or commercial companies.

1. First, there is a *nonunion shop*. In such a company the employees are not banded together in a union. They deal directly as individuals with their employer about employment, pay, promotion, resignation, discharge, grievances, etc.

2. Secondly, there is an *open shop*. In this case some of the employees are banded together in what is called a union, that is, they delegate to certain associates or outsiders the responsibility of bargaining for them with the employer about employment, pay, grievances, etc. But other employees in the same company do not join the group, but remain aloof and deal for themselves individually with the employer. An employee in such a company is free

to join or not join the union. In the United States a union certified as the bargaining agent now bargains for nonunion members as well as union members. (To join a union has a price tag attached to it consisting of the requirement of paying monthly dues to the union. The economic question whether paying dues is a sound investment or not is not being considered here.)

3. Thirdly, there is a *closed shop*. In a closed shop the situation is as follows:

(a) The union and the employer have agreed that he will not hire anybody unless the potential employee has first joined the union. This gives real *power* to the union; if the union officials do not like a man they may refuse to admit him into the union, and then of course the employer cannot hire him, and so the man cannot get the job he may want.

(b) The employee *must* pay union dues. If he will not, he is stricken from the union list and then the employer is obligated to discharge the employee. In theory, a so-called "conscientious objector" is sometimes permitted to pay his dues to a union sick benefit fund, but in practice this is practically a dead letter. A conscientious objector is looked on with suspicion and hostility. Life is hardly liveable in such a shop for such an employee.

4. Fourthly, there is a *union shop*. This is identical with a closed shop, except that an employee is not obligated to join the union *before* employment, but within thirty or sixty days after employment. The union shop compared to a closed shop gives an employer freedom to select employees and permits an employee at least to get a job even though the union officers may not like him or may have had a friend of their own in mind to get the job. But from then on the situation is identical with the closed shop; the employee *must* join the union; he *must* pay dues (or its equivalent); he *must* abide by what the union bargains for him. If he will not submit to that coercion, the employer is obligated to discharge the employee.

Those Wicked "Right-To-Work" Laws Of Seventeen States!

The closed shop was made illegal by the Taft-Hartley Act of the Federal government of the United States. Many union leaders are unhappy about that. But the Taft-Hartley Act does allow for the existence of a *union shop*.

However, seventeen states have laws forbidding union shop contracts between employers and unions. These laws are known as "right-to-work" laws, that is, they are laws which permit you to get and hold a job without being compelled (1) to join a union, (2) to pay union dues, or (3) to leave it to union agents to represent you in dealings with the employer. These "right-to-work" laws are exceedingly unpopular among some union leaders and some "Calvinists." These men demand the repeal of those "wicked" "right-to-work" laws so that a man cannot get work unless he joins the union and pays dues and lets the union represent him in all matters pertaining to earning a living.

Dr. Dirk Jellema's Letter In "The Banner"

Reverend Edward J. Tanis has for many years been an esteemed departmental editor for *The Banner*, the official weekly publication of the Christian Reformed church. In the September 23, 1955, issue of *The Banner*, Tanis had an article entitled "Are They Slaves" which Jellema interpreted as being in favor of "right-to-work" laws. Jellema considers "right-to-work" laws undesirable, and Tanis apparently felt constrained to publish the following in *The Banner* under date of October 7, 1955, (page 1194):

Dear Rev. Tanis:

Your *Banner* article of September 23, entitled "Are They Slaves," gives a somewhat misleading impression, doubtless inadvertently. You seem to favor the so-called "right-to-work laws" on the grounds that constitutional freedoms are otherwise infringed. However . . .

First, the courts have decided that if a majority of employees in a given plant freely vote to set up a bargaining association (union local), and agree with the

employer that all future employees should become members, no constitutional rights are violated.

Secondly, the "right-to-work laws" are opposed by labor especially because they forbid such a set-up, the so-called union shop. Now, the union shop is favored by the CLA, and is expressed in some of its contracts.

Third, most unions, including the CLA but also most AFL and CIO unions, make provisions for conscientious objectors. Such people are carried as purely nominal members and do not have to pay dues to the union: the dues are contributed to a charity of their choice.

Fourth, in speaking of the power of the labor unions, it should be remembered that only a minority of American workers are organized in any union.

Hence, it seems to me, your article gives a rather misleading impression.

* * *

Dirk Jellema

Jellema's opinions as expressed in the foregoing are the opinions of a man of note. (1) He is a graduate of Calvin College (1947); he has his Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Wisconsin (1951); (2) presently he is in the department of Social Studies at the Case Institute of Technology, Cleveland, Ohio; (3) he is a co-founder of the new *Guild of Calvinist Scholars*, which was organized in April, 1955; he is the editor of the *Notes*, published by the Guild; and (4) he is also a brain-truster for the Christian Labor Association, many of whose members are also members of the Christian Reformed church. He is a department editor of the Association's *Christian Labor Herald*, namely, of the department, "Religion and Labor."

Jellema's Argument Against "Right-to-Work" Laws

Jellema presents four arguments against state "right-to-work" laws. They are:

1. The law courts have decided that a union shop violates no constitutional rights.

2. The CLA favors the union shop, and has it in some of its contracts.
3. If you do not wish to pay dues to the union you can contribute the dues money to charity.
4. The power of a union is not great because the majority of all Americans are not yet in a union.

Let us consider Jellema's arguments.

Jellema's argument Number One. The courts may or may not have decided what Jellema quotes, but assume that they did. We imagine that Jellema would argue that the courts are the "powers that be"; that the powers that be are "ordained of God" and that therefore the decisions of the courts in this matter must be obeyed. Not only that, such decisions are apparently in Jellema's opinion the right decisions. PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM holds to the exactly opposite idea. The union shop is a coercion, a direct, unqualified violation of the Sixth Commandment. And we also hold that it is more important to obey God than to obey men.

Jellema's argument Number Two. Here Jellema argues that coercion (*geweld*, in Dutch) is all right because the CLA believes in it and officially practices it. As Jellema is undoubtedly influential in the CLA, this in effect is saying coercion is all right because Jellema advises the CLA that coercion is all right.

Jellema's argument Number Three. This is the argument that you can sugar coat coercion by making charity compulsory. We believe that what is forced out of a man is no longer *charity*. The essence of charity is that it is a *voluntary* act. The Christian religion once taught that God wanted voluntary worshippers; not men as driven by a lash. What *merit* is there in compulsory charity? And who can be assured that if a man gives \$48 in a year under compulsion to charity in lieu of paying union dues he may not otherwise set \$48 less aside for charity. This charity contribution is a phony. Actually so few men dare to refuse to pay the union dues that the "charity relief valve" is no real relief valve. The union detests you if you will not pay dues. Few men have the fortitude to stand up under hostile opinion.

Jellema's argument Number Four. We are unable to grasp the logic of this argument. What significance can it have for a specific man who is being coerced by a specific union that most people are not now members of unions? Apparently it says that if on a dark and lonely road you are waylaid by a murderer he is not a danger to you and his power need not be feared because there are not many actual murderers in the world!

Jellema does not use a single Biblical or economic argument. His arguments are based on (1) legalism; (2) the example of a labor association that calls itself Christian; (3) an alleged escape device; and (4) poor logic.

The simple fact is that Jellema is arguing in favor of coercion. He is arguing as positively against the plain teaching of Scripture as any man can argue. Scripture says: blessed are the meek; Jellema argues: blessed are the aggressors and the coercers.

There are also powerful clergymen who support the same idea, and who argue that "it has not been proven from Scripture to be sin" to perpetrate the coercion involved in a union shop. (See July, 1955, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.)

The plain truth is that some leaders in the Christian Reformed church have lost their moral bearings. They no longer hold to the most elementary explanation of the Sixth Commandment. They favor coercion or at least tolerate it. They teach it as a moral (!) principle in their schools. They favor it in a labor association manned by members of the Christian Reformed church.

We consider the basic idea which is involved — the idea that coercion is Christian morality — to be a damnable iniquity and a moral heresy.

F.N.

Rev. Norman S. Ream On The Idea That Coercion Is No More Moral And Wise For Industry Than It Would Be In The Church

The following are extracts from an article by Rev. Norman S. Ream, pastor of the First Methodist congregation in Neenah, Wisconsin. The article was first published in *Faith and*

Freedom, (monthly magazine published by Spiritual Mobilization, 1521 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles 17, California).

We Respectfully Desire Our Rights

Should every individual in our country be compelled to join a church? Let me argue in favor of this for a moment. It would benefit the work of the churches: they would get more income: they could do more good. When church leaders spoke out on social problems, they could speak with more authority if all people were church members. If the church helps all persons in the community, then all persons in the community should be forced to help the church. The church wants no "free riders."

In spite of these persuasive arguments most thoughtful men will reject compulsory church membership. They will say that goodness cannot be forced. They feel that compulsory membership would weaken the church, not strengthen it. The experience of established churches in Europe shows them how compulsory membership actually lowers attendance.

Many who respect compulsory church membership favor compulsory membership in labor unions. To combat compulsory union membership, 17 states have passed "right-to-work" laws. These laws seek to guarantee a workingman's right to join or not join a union as he pleases — just as he has the right to join or not join a church as he pleases. A great cry has been raised against these "right to work" laws in certain circles. Let us look into them, and see what can be said for them, as well as what can be said against them.

* * *

"You Have No Right Not to Join"

* * *

The "right to work" laws are meant to secure the freedom we have been discussing. They are meant to guarantee a workingman's freedom to work at the job of

his own choosing. "Right to work" laws do not guarantee anyone a job. They do not deny the right of an employer to fire an employee. They do not deny the right of an employee to join a union. What they try to do is guarantee to each man the right to take any job offered to him which is mutually agreeable to him and to his employer — without being required to enter a union against his will.

* * *

"Right to work" laws are opposed by union leaders because they give the workingman the right not to join a union. The union leaders do not argue against a right to join a union, but they argue vociferously against a man's right *not* to join.

But doesn't the right to join imply free choice, and if man is to have free choice shouldn't he be free not to join a union? Can a man be said to have a right if he is not free to exercise it both affirmatively and negatively?

* * *

Free Riding Can Stop

One could with equal logic argue that the right not to join a church would "subvert religious peace, exploit man's need to worship, and deluge the community with religious irresponsibility. "Right not to join a church" laws do not make Christians; they only victimize the individual worshipper and make his organization ineffective."

When applied to the church this is obvious nonsense. Is it less nonsensical when applied to unions?

The churches have proved that they are healthier when membership is not compulsory. Are unions afraid to try to prove their health? A return to voluntary methods of collecting members would prove the union's true worth; it would show how much unions are desired by workingmen who give their approval voluntarily.

* * *

**Mr. Joseph Gritter, Secretary Of The
Christian Labor Association
On The Idea That It Is Immoral To Stay Out
Of A Union, And That Coercion Of Men
Into The CLA Is Moral!**

The following has appeared on page 1322, of the November 4, 1955 issue of *The Banner*, the official English language weekly magazine of the Christian Reformed church. In this article, entitled "Social Responsibility," the department editor of *The Banner* introduces a letter from Mr. Joseph Gritter.

Social Responsibility

The letter below, with my own comment [as department editor] appended, is placed in this department because the letter of Dr. Dirk Jellema, of the Case Institute of Technology, also appeared in this department. Mr. Gritter is secretary of the Christian Labor Association, with headquarters in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He is also the editor-in-chief of the *Christian Labor Herald*.

Dear Rev. Tanis,

In the October 7 issue of *The Banner* you published a letter of Dr. Dirk Jellema in which the CLA is mentioned twice in connection with the union shop question and the so-called "right to work" laws.

It is true that the CLA has negotiated union shop contracts, although it always provided protection for conscientious objectors. The CLA wishes that it were not necessary to have union shop clauses in contracts.* But it has found out by sad experience that it is not possible to maintain a union without it, even among Christian employees. Under the laws of our nation the union that has bargaining power bargains for all the workers, and if it does not maintain a majority among

*This differs from Jellema's statement that the CLA "favors" union shop contracts.

the employees as members of the union it will eventually lose its right to represent the workers and the organization will fall apart.

That is due to a lack of social consciousness and an unwillingness to assume moral obligations. Too many workers, Christians too, will gladly reap the benefits of what a union has gained for them too, but they refuse to share in the obligations which must be borne to make such union action possible. In any plant such unorganized workers can soon ruin the union.

The CLA has taken the position that when people refuse to meet their moral obligations, thereby endangering what others by devoted and strenuous efforts have built up, they must have a very good, conscientious reason why such refusal should be honored. Especially for Christian men and women, who through their organization have promoted justice, and enjoy also protection against an organization which they do not desire, when they observe that their gains and protection are being destroyed by certain obstreperous characters who are purely selfish, the question arises whether it is justifiable to tolerate such destructive work, and whether it is not a *duty to demand* of such people that they become cooperative in the promotion of mutual interests, always of course honoring the convictions of those who have real conscientious objections.

It is not correct that most of the AFL and CIO unions honor conscientious objections. In a few cases conscientious objectors working in a plant when a union shop contract goes into effect are allowed to continue working provided they agree to pay an amount equal to the union dues into the union's sick benefit fund and pledge not to work in case the union calls a strike. But that does not apply to new employees who are hired, generally.

As to the so-called "right to work" laws, they are indeed aimed at destroying union shop contracts. Actually such laws should be named "right to work unorganized" laws, since that is their purpose. Everything depends upon

what principles motivate the proponents. The exercise of the "right" to work unorganized in a place where the majority in the employees' unit have decided to be organized in a union which promotes the best interests of all, depends upon the principles, or lack of them, underlying such exercise. It is not as simple as some people think. For a Christian the question is whether he has a social and moral obligation to join with others in promoting justice, and whether he as a Christian is not duty-bound to give support to the organization that promotes his best interests too? Only one reason can relieve him of such obligation and duty: the conscientious conviction that he would be sinning by joining the organization because of unchristian practices of which it is guilty!

J. Gritter, Secretary, CLA

Gritter's proposition is very simple, namely, individuals who [allegedly] enjoy the benefits [?] of the labor movement are under obligation to support that movement.

Our challenging reply is as that of Rev. Ream, previously quoted: society benefits from the "church"; the church then may demand (if Gritter's argument is sound) that *everybody must join the church*. Gritter argues for the union to be permitted to do what the church has come to see is wrong for itself.

Then the argument proceeds. If men should "not join a labor organization [such as the CIO] because its practices are contrary to the law of God, then they are duty bound to join a labor organization which does honor those divine laws." (The foregoing is quoted from the editor's appended summary.) The assumption is that the CLA "does honor those divine laws." It is our opinion that the CLA is suffering from a serious hallucination if it considers itself Christian. Gritter has plainly outlined that he believes in the right to *coerce*, which positively violates the Sixth Commandment and also Matthew 5:5 which reads, Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. He cannot believe that, if he believes in coercion. For him Scripture could read: Blessed are they that coerce, for they shall inherit the earth.

The CLA does have some of the incidental characteristics of a Christian organization. But those are not really significant.

Many of its members attend church services, have been baptized, have been admitted into the church on profession of faith, send their children to a Christian private school, observe the Sabbath. But that does not make an association to which those individuals belong a Christian association.

The CLA also condemns *grave acts of violence* by unions, and presumably the CLA does not commit grave acts of violence — murder, assassination, arson, destruction of property, mayhem, etc. It is very much to the credit of the CLA. Nobody will dispute that, except men who extend the principle of coercion to violent coercion as well as legalistic coercion. Such union leaders go further than Gritter; but he and they believe finally in the same basic principle of coercion; *it is only a question of degree*.

There are a whole series of economic fallacies in the thinking of Gritter. He neither interprets Scripture correctly nor understands economics. We shall come back to the economic fallacies of Gritter later.

Gritter is, however, not considered to be out of bounds by the Christian Reformed church. On page 1339 of the same issue of *The Banner*, there is a list of "Accredited Causes," recommended for "financial support." The second name on the list is the CLA. THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH BELIEVES IN PROMOTING AN ORGANIZATION WHICH OPERATES ON A PRINCIPLE WHICH THE CHURCH ITSELF WOULD NEVER DARE TO ACCEPT, NAMELY, THE PRINCIPLE OF COERCIVE MEMBERSHIP.

F. N.

A Union Which Should Be Organized

Unions have several legitimate functions. One of those functions pertains to wages. A union is certainly entitled to and *should* operate in a manner *so that an employer cannot exploit his employees*.

We look around. Are there such instances today? Is there any employer who is genuinely exploiting his employees by paying those employees less than the going wage?

We know of one current flagrant and disgraceful case of exploitation.

We refer to Christian school teachers, who are employed, mostly, by members of the Christian Reformed church.

Why does the CLA fail to operate where its duty is the plainest, namely, in a case where the exploitation is the worst? The answer is, we believe, that it will be unpopular for the CLA to organize a union which will result in costing the *members* of the Christian Reformed church some money.

Christian school teachers may wish to

1. Organize a Christian school teachers' union.
2. Elect some tough bargaining agents.
3. If necessary call a strike, and put up a mass picket line. The Supreme Court has said that a picket line is an instrument for "free speech!"
4. Affiliate with the CLA under its *union shop* contract, as it is alleged that it has not been proven to any Christian Reformed synod from Scripture to be sin to have a coercive union. Then nobody can be a Christian school teacher unless he (she) joins the union. Remember how Gritter describes people who wish to profit (?) from a union but will not join.

Let nobody take offense at this. Why should a Christian school teacher have less "rights" than a carpenter or an electrician or a manufacturing employee?

We are not giving the evidence of "exploitation" of teachers. It is too obvious. Drive up to a Christian Reformed meeting of some kind and pick out the poorest automobiles. Those belong, you will discover, to some poor teacher being "sweated" by the members of the church, by their "brethren."

We tell a simple anecdote. Five years ago a young girl whom we know worked as a typist and filing clerk. She decided she wanted an education. She worked her way through college. She decided to teach in a Christian school. Five years have passed in which salaries generally have risen because of inflation — that infernal device by which the poor or ignorant are robbed without

their understanding what has happened to them. And the girl has had four years of college. She got a job all right. She earns the same pay today as a Christian school teacher that she earned as a typist — despite inflation, five years of more maturity, and four years of struggling through college.

We offer our services to Christian school teachers to organize a union operating on Biblical principles. We offer the same services to another professional group, second in line in regard to being sweated; we refer to ministers.

We trust readers will understand that in regard to a few of the foregoing suggestions we are not *wholly* in earnest. But on the main issue — exploitation — we are in dead earnest; Christian school teachers are the most-exploited group in America.

F.N.

Our Dutch Brethren Are "Cutting Us Up"

We expected it and it has happened. Our Dutch brethren are "cutting us up." We criticized them; they are criticizing us.

Who started it? *We did not.* We admit to striking a counterblow. The sequence is: Abraham Kuyper and his successors struck at us first; *they* started it; we struck back; and now the current leaders of Dutch Calvinism are promptly attacking us.

We are not asking for sympathy.

Calvinism: Parochial, Provincial And National

With the passing of time and increasing maturity we have come to realize that we are not Dutch Calvinists but *American* Calvinists. We are not really interested in spreading a peculiarly Dutch brand of Calvinism. We are glad to take from Dutch Calvinism what appears superior, but we do not swallow it whole.

There was a controversy in the early church about circumcision. The Apostle Peter was for universal circumcision — for gentiles

as well as Jews. The Apostle Paul was against it. We believe it was the late Professor J. Gresham Machen who said that the requirement of circumcision among gentiles would have been a serious handicap to the spreading of Christianity. There was something *parochial* or *provincial* or at least *national* about circumcision. We feel the same way about *Dutch Calvinism*. There is something parochial or provincial or, at least, national about it. It lacks the wide sweep of the universal.

We have observed with some amusement, how American Calvinists react to the trotting out of the Dutch brand of Calvinism. Almost universally, the presentation is received with cold politeness. The Christian Reformed church has not been effective in the American environment, and it is not ever likely to be unless it discards some peculiarly Dutch ideas which are basically neither part of Calvinism, nor Biblical, nor palatable to an American. We are proud of our Netherlands' origin, but are not out to spread a Dutchy Calvinism.

F. N.

What Happened To The Daily Newspaper Abraham Kuyper Founded?

Abraham Kuyper in his prime, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, founded a daily newspaper and gave it the name, *De Standaard*, which corresponds to the English *standard* in the sense of a battle flag, or ensign or regimental colors. *De Standaard* was the Calvinist daily standard fluttering at the head of the Calvinist religious forces in the Netherlands.

De Standaard is not published anymore. It had a policy during World War II which was its undoing. After occupation of the Netherlands by Hitler *De Standaard* followed a policy of "not resisting the lawful government." What was that "lawful government" (*wettige overheid*)? Hitler's occupational army! That policy of nonresistance to Hitlerian Germany caused great injury to the struggling underground resistance movement.

When the regular Dutch government was restored, it prohibited the continuation of the publication of *De Standaard* on the ground of its dubious conduct during World War II.

We consider that to be a disgraceful ending for a once-famous Dutch Calvinist daily newspaper, founded by a devout and well-intentioned man.

The opposite idea of resistance is collaboration. Was collaboration necessarily the result of disloyalty or treachery? We do not believe that that follows. We do not consider our Dutch Calvinist brethren to have been quislings — by intent.

Behind their tragic nonresistance policy, which in effect became collaboration with Hitler, was a pious, erroneous idea. That idea was that the powers that be must be obeyed because they are "ordained of God." Hitler was not to be resisted because he was ordained of *God*. What an idea!

PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM has previously made it clear that it does not consider God as licensing any particular government by a pipe line from his throne to that earthly government. God (in our opinion) sanctions only *good* governments, that is, governments basically based on the *revealed will* of God (the Decalogue) and not evil governments connected by an alleged mystical pipe line with God. (See September, 1955, issue of PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, pages 251 and following.)

It is sad to see how unsound ideas have led to bad morality. We are admirers of a famous Frenchman, Blaise Pascal; he wrote:

Man is but a reed, — the weakest thing in nature,— but he is a reed that thinks. It is not necessary that the whole universe should arm itself to crush him. A vapor, a drop of water, is enough to kill him. But if the universe should crush him, man would still be nobler than that which slays him, for he knows that he dies; but of the advantage which it has over him the universe knows nothing. Our dignity consists, then, wholly in thought. Our elevation must come from this, not from space and time, which we cannot fill. Let us, then, labor to think well: this is the fundamental principle of morals.

For Pascal man's dignity consisted in man's ability to think well; and to think well was "the fundamental principle of morals."

Our Dutch brethren have been unable to think well on the question of the relationship of government either to men or to God. For them the rule was "obey the powers that be" because they are "ordained of God," which rule (as they erroneously interpreted it) nullified the universal rule, which reads, "We must obey God rather than men." Although we have had some hesitancy about accepting Pascal's statement (that to think well is the fundamental principle of morals) we believe it is applicable at least in this sad history.

F.N.

The Origin Of "Trouw," The Successor To "De Standaard"

Not all Dutch Calvinists were during World War II so confused in their thinking as the editors of *De Standaard*.

There were some real Calvinist *men* in the Dutch underground resistance against Hitler. One of them was a young man named Speelman, son of a Reformed preacher. Speelman helped to organize an underground paper which took the name of *Trouw*. (*Trouw* is the Dutch word for faithfulness, or loyalty, or devotion. The name was well chosen.) Speelman may be described as the "powerhouse" or driving force behind the publication of *Trouw*.

Eventually, the Germans captured Speelman. He was, as the Dutch say, *gefusilleerd* — shot by a firing squad. A young man as this one is worthy of a high rank in the halls of fame. We salute him.

After the war *Trouw*, despite its struggling, underground origin, was converted into a daily, and became in effect the successor of *De Standaard*. It has become an important daily newspaper.

There is no official connection between *Trouw* and the Anti-Revolutionary Party of the Netherlands, the super-Calvinistic party in the Netherlands. *Trouw* is not specifically Calvinist, but is a "Christian-nationalist" type of publication with strong emphasis on the "nationalist" characteristic.

Nevertheless, the close relationship between the Anti-Revolutionary Party and *Trouw* is not a relationship which should be minimized. The editor-in-chief of *Trouw* is Dr. J.A.H.J.S. Bruins Slot, who is a representative for the Anti-Revolutionary Party in the Lower House (*Tweede Kamer*).

As an opposition newspaper immediately after the war, *Trouw* has had an admirable record. Later, when the Anti-Revolutionary Party veered its course away from one of opposition to the party in power (which was socialistic), there was also (as was to be expected) a corresponding degenerative shift in the attitude of *Trouw*. This shift was natural, the editor-in-chief being a member of the Anti-Revolutionary Party.

We have before us the September 8, 1955, issue of *Trouw*. On the front page in the left column — the main editorial position — there is a column and a half editorial in a contemptuous vein about PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM. The editorial is not signed, which we assume indicates that the editor-in-chief, Bruins Slot, wrote the editorial himself. As a responsible leader of one of the Calvinist political parties in the Netherlands we can rely that his views are typical of many of the members of the Anti-Revolutionary Party.

The outstanding *general* reaction which we have to the editorial is this: Bruins Slot has reverted to type; he has returned to the erroneous ideas that discredited and disgraced *De Standaard*; he is back to the position that a government, good or evil, has a mystical relationship with God (a) which is far more important than the relationship of government to men; (b) which requires that the government *must be obeyed* because it has a pipe line from God; and also (c) which involves the idea that a government has "special powers" beyond what mere men can give it. These are the intellectual errors which caused the shameful end of *De Standaard*.

What is written against PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM in a paper as *Trouw* is, we believe, something that we should not ignore. We expect constant guerrilla attacks but believe it damaging to our prestige to let what Bruins Slot has written stand unanswered.

We have an additional reason for working over Bruins Slot's ideas. It was inevitable that Bruins Slot would be quoted, especial-

ly by men who disagree with our ideas but do not wish to undertake for themselves openly the responsibility for disputing them. For example, Reverend William Haverkamp has in his department in *De Wachter* already quoted extensively from Bruins Slot's editorial. *De Wachter* (*The Watchman*) is the official Dutch language newspaper of the Christian Reformed church. When a leading daily in the Netherlands assails us and an official Christian Reformed weekly promptly reprints part of what was said against us we owe it to our readers to give our rejoinder.

Haverkamp apparently believes that Bruins Slot has a wonderful inheritance (*erfdeel*) of ideas from Kuyper on the relationship of government to men and to God. He comments that Bruins Slot is not willing to trade his intellectual inheritance for our ideas.

Haverkamp has incidentally revealed a very basic insight. He senses that Bruins Slot represents traditional ideas, namely, Abraham Kuyper's ideas; they are ideas for which the defunct *De Standaard* also stood. They are peculiarly *Dutchy* ideas which should not be admitted into any universal, world-wide Calvinism.

Bruins Slot makes three general charges against us:

1. Errors in regard to facts, or obvious errors of interpretation;
2. Wrong ideas regarding the *cause* of American prosperity;
3. Wrong ideas on the *authority of government*.

Those three basic charges are all supercharged with an elevated contempt regarding which we have already commented.

Because we are "on that subject" we shall begin with Bruins Slot's ideas on the *authority of government*.

F.N.

Dr. Bruins Slot On The Authority Of Government

Bruins Slot, editor-in-chief of *Trouw*, leading Dutch Calvinist daily, accepts the idea that the authority of a government is

directly from God. In order that the issue between us be clear to everyone we declare that the authority of no existing government is *directly* from God.

Let us see where Bruins Slot's ideas lead him. We shall quote that part of his editorial against us which covers this subject. He first declares that we have understood very little about the French Revolution, or Abraham Kuyper, or the Free University of Amsterdam, or the Anti-Revolutionary Party. Then he proceeds:

Let us take just one example. The expression, "a standard of living worthy of a human being" (*menschwaardig bestaan*), even though it can be understood in a Christian sense, is certainly not a Kuyperian expression. Kuyper to the contrary spoke of man as an image bearer of God. And when one speaks in that manner it becomes evident that it is possible to speak not only in respect to the relationship of Government to People, but really that one should speak of the relationship of Government to God. And then the peculiar inherent authority (*eigenaardige gezagsfunctie*) of Government, (regarding which PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM speaks so slightly in connection with the French Revolution and regarding which it calls the idea socialistic) comes to stand at the apex, the very forefront. But the writer in PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM fails exactly by not mentioning that. He recognizes no peculiar, inherent authority (*eigen recht*) of government. He sets government on a mere equality with each temperamental individual.*

*Because of the importance of this statement and to remove questions of doubt about the translation, we here give the Dutch original.

"Want om maar een ding te noemen. De uitdrukking 'menschwaardig bestaan' al kan deze ook best in christelijke zin worden opgevat, is geen Kuyperiaanse uitdrukking. Kuyper sprak veeler over de mens als beelddrager Gods. En als er zo over gesproken wordt is het duidelijk dat men hierover niet slechts kan spreken in de betrekking van Overheid en Volk, maar dat men er juist over moet spreken in de betrekking van de Overheid tot God. En dan komt juist de eigenaardige gezagsfunctie van de Overheid, die dit blad in verband met de Franse Revolutie zo bagatelliseert en voor socialistisch uitkrijt, op de eerste plaats te staan. Maar daar spreekt de schrijver juist niet over! Hij kent geen eigen recht der Overheid. Hij stelt de Overheid op één lijn met elk willekeurig individu!"

There are many basic propositions in the foregoing. We believe they are all fallacious and pernicious despite the religiosity of the statement.

Let us take first the most obvious statement in the quotation, namely, this proposition, that a government has an inherent peculiar authority beyond what any man has. What necessarily follows from that? This, namely, that no government can be *from men*. Why not? Because, if a government were derived from men, it could have only the authority those men originally had. A government derived from men might have less authority than the authority of its individual citizens; or it might have equal authority. But no government with such a human origin could have more authority than the grantors had. *A* cannot give *B* \$1,000 if *A* does not have the \$1,000. If a government is from men, the maximum authority of a government is limited to what those men originally had.

The idea of Bruins Slot (which he indicates he got from Abraham Kuyper) is that a government has very definitely a greater authority, a "peculiar inherent authority" above any "temperamental individual" citizen. This greater authority can come from one source only, according to his and Kuyper's theory, namely, directly from God.

We have here that old idea again, a pipe line of *power* direct from the throne of God to every existing government, good or bad, and every sphere sovereignty. That *power*, for example, was piped directly from God to Adolph Hitler! You will remember that *De Standaard* did not positively reject that infernal proposition!

The traditional thinking in the United States has been wholly contrary. The Continental Congress, which on July 4, 1776, signed the Declaration of Independence, propounded an altogether different doctrine. In their second paragraph, in order to explain their claim to certain inalienable rights (life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness) they wrote:

Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

Here is a theory that no power of a government can go beyond a human grant. This theory is in irreconcilable conflict with the idea of Bruins Slot that there is a greater power in government than ever existed in the men who are governed.

We agree with the Continental Congress of 1776, and we disagree with Bruins Slot. He is wrong and pious. The Continental Congress was merely right. It is to be hoped that piosity is not permitted to sanctify error.

Everything stands or falls on this simple question: does a government have more authority than its citizens? If so, it must have got that greater authority from some greater source than the citizens. The only greater sources are God or Satan.* Satan is never considered by Calvinists to be the source of governments; (governments are manifestations of the "common grace" of God!). Therefore, Hitler had a "peculiar inherent authority" directly from God! Now we can realize clearly how *De Standaard* came to follow the course it did during World War II.

Grant the foregoing to Abraham Kuyper, to *De Standaard*, to the Anti-Revolutionary Party and to Bruins Slot and where do you end up? Here are four propositions that follow naturally from Bruins Slot's major idea:

1. God has restricted individual men by and to the Ten Commandments.
2. But God has given to government more authority or rights than individual men have.
3. Therefore, governments have direct authority to go beyond the Ten Commandments, that is, they may violate the Ten Commandments.

*A person reading this manuscript with some amusement worked out the obvious syllogisms:

1. The powers that be are ordained of God;
2. Satan is one of the powers that be;
3. Therefore, Satan is ordained of God!

Then he outlined the succeeding syllogism:

1. All the powers ordained of God must be obeyed;
2. Satan is a power ordained of God;
3. Therefore, Satan must be obeyed!

To help those who object to these conclusions but who do not know how to prove that they are wrong, we may later analyze the fallacy in the first syllogism.

4. It is exactly that right to violate the Ten Commandments which constitutes the purpose for claiming a "peculiar inherent authority" for government.

Hitler, you see, was operating quite within his "rights" derived directly from God. Concentration camps, firing squads, lies, violence, wars, oppression — all these are the products of the "peculiar, inherent authority" of government. Men are bound by the Decalogue; governments are not!

Bruins Slot accuses us of staying at what seems to be the somewhat foolish and un-Christian level of the relationship of government to *mere men*. That is not pious enough for him. He is loftier. He (following Abraham Kuyper) puts the whole discussion on the level of the relationship of government to the great God of the universe. We repeat part of our quotation from Bruins Slot:

Kuyper to the contrary spoke of man as an image bearer of God. And when one speaks in that manner it becomes evident that one [should not speak of the relationship of government to men] but really that one should speak of the relationship of government to God. And then the peculiar inherent authority of government . . . comes . . . to the very forefront.

What is really being said here? Here are Bruins Slot's two main ideas:

1. Man is an image bearer of God.
2. Therefore, government has a peculiar, inherent authority direct from God.

Is there any *logical* connection? Grant that Man is created in the image of God. Is that a ground for government having a "peculiar, inherent authority" over such an "image bearer"? On first thought, *just the opposite conclusion would appear to be warranted, namely, because man is an image bearer of God, therefore, no government could possibly have a peculiar, inherent authority over him*. Not only is that a natural first thought, but it is a common sense last thought. By what erroneous, circuitous reasoning does Bruins Slot come to his contrary-to-common-sense conclusion?

Let us endeavor sympathetically to follow the man's thought. It goes something like this:

1. Because man is an image bearer of God, therefore, man is entitled to something. As Bruins Slot is considering what we wrote in earlier issues about a *living wage*, in which connection we used the customary Dutch expression, *menschwaardig bestaan* (a standard of living worthy of a human being), it will be clear that that *something* to which a man is entitled pertains to the natural things of this life.

2. In order to obtain that *something* pertaining to the natural things of life to which we are entitled, we should therefore have more protection than the Ten Commandments of God give us. However, assume that men are not sinful in their brotherly relations, that is, that they do not exploit their neighbors. Or assume that men, although inclined to be sinful in their brotherly relations, are nevertheless restricted by a government which *fully enforces* the Ten Commandments, *but does no more*. Such a government would be operating under the Ten Commandments just as men should. Such a government would be on an equality with men in the sense that the rule for individuals was also the rule for the government. Such a government would not have any grounds whatever for claiming a peculiar inherent authority. And such a government could be derived from mere men (as the Declaration of Independence indicates). That men violate the Ten Commandments and that governments do not enforce the Ten Commandments is (it seems to us) no necessary grounds for going beyond the Ten Commandments and for saying that God authorizes the breach to be plugged by giving to government some super powers. Why not simply continue to insist on enforcing the Ten Commandments. Do that, and what more do you want?

3. But Bruins Slot nevertheless wants some *extra* powers for a government which extra powers can be used to do something for man, the image bearer of God. Those extra powers are intended to redistribute "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Grant that *A* observed the Ten Commandments faithfully; that means that he did not exploit his neighbor, was forbearing, engaged in charity, etc.; grant that the government polices *A* in regard to not exploiting his neighbor; and grant that it also polices *B* and *C*

and D. But nevertheless the end result is that the backward nations of the world, the spendthrifts, the drunkards, the easy going, improvident and shiftless all over the world do not all have a living wage, a *menschwaardig bestaan!* The rest of men (according to our assumption) observed the commandments of God. What they own is morally theirs, either they have not sinned in getting what they have or the government has in their case at least enforced the Decalogue to restrain them. But there are still these "image bearers of God" who do not have a living wage (a *menschwaardig bestaan*) in whatever peculiar Biblical sense that Abraham Kuyper meant it. And what now should the government do and what power should it have?

4. In order to enforce *beyond the Ten Commandments*, the redistribution of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" a government, according to Bruins Slot and Abraham Kuyper, must have a "peculiar, inherent power."

Personally as primitive Christians and as thorough-going Americans we object to the doctrine of Abraham Kuyper and Bruins Slot. Neither of these men, we believe, has a firm grasp of the concepts of justice or of liberty. If what they teach on the relationship of government to God and of government to men is Calvinism, then we are not Calvinists. We never have been; are not now; and intend never to be.

The ideas of Abraham Kuyper and Bruins Slot have not been widely accepted in America (until the latest 25 years). They were not accepted, thank God, by the founders of this country. It can be demonstrated that everywhere where the ideas of Abraham Kuyper and Bruins Slot on this subject have been accepted the progress of mankind has been hindered.

We have no intention of letting the ideas of Abraham Kuyper and Bruins Slot be promoted in America. For us to be tolerant of their ideas would involve us in a fatal inconsistency. We have begun the PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM movement with six basic Declarations. Declaration Number Four reads:

- (a) Promote a SINGLE rule of morality ;and (b) reject a dual rule, namely, one rule for individuals and a conflicting rule for groups.

By "groups" we have particularly *governments* in mind (but also those absurd *sphere sovereignties* which we shall analyze some other time). In contrast to PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM, Abraham Kuyper and Bruins Slot hold to a *double* standard of morality, one rule for individuals and another for individuals collectively.

Let governments enforce the Decalogue. They will then need no authority beyond the Decalogue. They will need no pipe line from God sending them extra-Decalogian powers. They will need no apologists as Abraham Kuyper or Bruins Slot with their medieval ideas of some mystical authority derived from God and going to the biggest rogues in history — such as Stalin, Hitler, and Mussolini. What good for mankind ever came from the Bruins Slot idea that a government has a "peculiar, inherent authority"?

* * *

We call attention to an untrue statement of Bruins Slot. He says that PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM "sets government on a mere equality with each *temperamental* individual." We have never written anything of the sort. We painstakingly have declared that a government must be bound by the Decalogue. Is the Decalogue *temperamental*?

* * *

Eventually, we shall analyze policies of the government of the United States and of other governments. And when we do that, what shall we find? We shall discover that just what is wrong with the world is the (a) violation of the Decalogue *by governments* on a claim that they (b) have certain legitimate special powers to do just that, or in Bruins Slot's words, they have "peculiar, inherent authority." God, in our opinion, never established special pipe lines to certain people in order to authorize them to frustrate the Ten Commandments.

* * *

In future issues we shall take up the second major idea of Bruins Slot, namely, that America is prosperous just by pure

"luck." It is that part of the Bruins Slot editorial against us which Haverkamp quotes approvingly. Haverkamp, obviously in the Dutch tradition, does not make an "American" approach. We plan to analyze especially which commandment in the Decalogue is being violated by this other argument of Bruins Slot.*

F.N.

Information About 1956 Subscriptions

Subscriptions to PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM are on a calendar-year basis. We shall be much pleased if you will renew your subscription for the coming year, 1956. Use convenient return envelope.

We are also interested in *new* subscribers for 1956. It will not be practical to become a subscriber in 1956 without having read the 1955 issues. To be a *new* subscriber for 1956 requires purchase of the 1955 issues which we are having bound in paper covers. *New* subscribers for 1956 can subscribe for a total of \$4: paperbound for 1955, \$2; and future issues in 1956, \$2. Paperbound copies to *nonsubscribers* are available at \$3; clothbound copies at \$4.50.

In appreciation of present subscribers we shall send them a paperbound book FREE, if they will return their copies to us; for a *cloth* bound book there will be a \$1.50 charge.

*(We shall be glad to send to any reader who can read the Dutch language well, a photostatic copy of the whole *Trouw* editorial against PROGRESSIVE CALVINISM.)

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