

From the Foreword to *Dr. Kuyper in de Caricatuur*
(Amsterdam: Van Holkema & Warendorf, 1909).

Gentlemen!

Would I object, you asked me, if you brought out a collection of the cartoons which have lampooned me for nearly 40 years?

Not at all! I would welcome such a publication. It suits me very well just now. My children have repeatedly asked me for a collection of them, but I couldn't begin to collect even a tenth of them.

This is an art form that I admire. And I am proud to say I have helped improve it by providing subjects to poke fun at—at my own expense.

[There follows a page and a half about the history of cartooning in the Low Countries.].

There is lots to laugh at in finite and sinful human life—much delightful nonsense. From time to time God himself holds us in derision. Psalmists and prophets—Christ himself when speaking to Pharisees—used biting critique and cutting irony.

Cynics abuse the art form. But the right use pointedly rebukes the sin, never the sinner. The butt of a cartoon enjoys it, can laugh at himself, and in some cases admit the point is well taken and needs to be corrected. Cartoons, by exaggerating, help you see your faults that you yourself are blind to. Political cartoons are also very informative: they tell you how the Opposition sees you, interprets your intentions, and assesses your strength (or lack thereof). The cartoonist is a leak from the strategy huddle of your opponents. Many cartoons showed me how my opponents were mistaken about my goals or my measures. This was worth its weight in gold. It helped me make my counterattacks more effective.

One more thing. Your collection will give me personal pleasure. It will demonstrate that the opposition was never able to do me in. Just to be haunted and harassed by a cartoonist for thirty years and more proves my staying power.

We Calvinist have no cartoonists. Our Dutch cartoonists have been mostly on the side of the liberal majority. Now it is the honour of political cartooning that it always targets the majority and champions the minority. By helping liberalism become a minority in 1888, and again in 1901, (and hopefully once more in 1909), I have helped our cartoonists become nobler and more generous, since they now speak for the minority.

Dr. A. Kuyper
1 April 1909