



REFORMED

— P A V I L I O N —

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*For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion:
in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me;
he shall set me up upon a rock.*

—Psalm 27:5

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And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money...And if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish; he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. And if he smite out his manservant's tooth, or his maidservant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake.

—Exodus 21:20–21, 26–27

Protection for the Foreign Slave

This judgment concerned the foreign slave. The “servant” was what God elsewhere called “thy bondmen,” and the “maid” was what God elsewhere called “thy bondmaids” (Lev. 25:44). These bondmen and bondmaids were not those Hebrews who had become poor and had sold themselves as indentured servants to their Hebrew brethren. Rather, these bondmen and bondmaids were foreign slaves that the Hebrews had bought from “the heathen that are round about you” (v. 44). These foreign slaves were Ammonites or Moabites or Syrians or Philistines or Egyptians or Edomites or Amalekites or from nations even farther off. In all the sorrowful ways that men became slaves in those days—by subjugation to a foreign power in war; by slavers, who stole men and women and children as merchandise; by extreme poverty that forced individuals or families to sell themselves—these heathen had become slaves and had been purchased by the Hebrews as their “bondmen for ever” (v. 46).

How sad was the plight of the foreign slave. The foreign slave was far away from his native land. The foreign slave had no friends or family nearby to protect him. The foreign slave had no hope of being released. The foreign slave belonged to the Hebrew family that had purchased him and would be passed down to the children as their possession. “Ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession” (Lev. 25:46).

But God protected the foreign slave. If a Hebrew man struck his foreign slave with a rod so hard that the slave died, the Hebrew man would be punished by being put to death himself. If a Hebrew man struck his foreign slave in the eye, so that the slave was blinded in that eye, the slave was to be set free for his eye's sake. If a Hebrew man struck his foreign slave in the mouth, so that the slave lost his tooth, the slave was to be set free for his tooth's sake. If a Hebrew man struck his slave, so that the slave could not work for a day or two, the Hebrew man was to suffer the loss of those days' work without any remuneration.

Why did God so strictly protect the foreign slave? After all, the foreign slave was a heathen. The foreign slave had worshiped strange gods. The foreign slave had no part with God's people. The foreign slave had no claim on God's mercy. The foreign slave was from a nation that at one time or another had attacked and hurt Israel. The foreign slave had every injury coming to him. Why would God so carefully protect the foreign slave?

Ah, therein lies the gospel of our salvation. For what claim on the mercy of God do you and I have more than the foreign slave? What part do you and I have with God's people more than the foreign slave? What service to the true and living God have we rendered more than the foreign slave? What love for the Lord and his people have we had more than the foreign slave?

What protection—and even salvation!—have we deserved more than the foreign slave?

God protected the foreign slave for your sakes and for mine, that you and I unworthy foreign slaves might know the gospel of the free and sovereign grace of God to us heathen sinners. And behold him who came from a

far-off land to be God's servant unto our salvation. He "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:7–8).

—AL

CORRESPONDENCE

The Christian School (continued)

Reformed Pavilion is grateful to God that we may present to our readers the continued correspondence between Mr. Philip Rainey and a committee of Remnant Reformed Church's council on the topic of the Christian school. The first letters in this correspondence, along with an introduction to their publication, can be found in the February 15, 2025, issue of *Reformed Pavilion* (volume 2, issue 45). This round of correspondence has as its main topic whether scripture requires the Christian day

school or not. Mr. Rainey answers in the negative; the committee answers in the positive.

As before, the letters are published here without editing, with the exception of adding a date that was not in a letter but that was in the email to which the letter was attached. And, as before, our sincere thanks to Mr. Rainey for allowing his letter to be published. May the Lord use this correspondence for the good of his people and for the recovery and the spread of the Reformed conception of the Christian school.

—AL

February 23, 2025

In your most recent response, you teach the law/gospel distinction. I believe the distinction as you state it. I do not believe, however that the law/gospel distinction clears your school doctrine from parochialism nor from a seed of consistory lording over parents. You can have the law/gospel distinction, but if you make something a law that is not required by the Word of God the law/gospel distinction does not help you. And this has been my contention all along, namely the institution of the Christian day school is not a command of God's law.

The difference between us is not that you apply the law/gospel distinction to the calling of parents to educate their children and I don't. The difference between us is that you believe the

institution of the day school is the law of God to parents so that they sin by not using the school. In contrast, I believe the obligation or demand of the covenant to parents is "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4b). The command to the parents is "educate your children in the truth of God, educate them to walk in God's ways in every aspect of their lives", but the form of that education (the day school) is not commanded.

It seems to me you have not demonstrated from Scripture that the institution of the day school is the law of God. I know that in a Reformed church the truth is also decided on the basis of the Reformed confessions. The confessions decide a matter even where there is no

explicit bible verse. I believe that. The only confessional proof for your position seems to be Lords Day 38 and its reference to “the schools.” The other document you cite is the Church Order (Article 21), but the Church Order is not a confession. At both Classis September 2022 of the Reformed Protestant Churches and at the subsequent Classis where the Kamps appeal was heard, it was declared as settled dogma, indubitable truth needing no further reflection or study that “schools” in the Lord’s Day means and can only mean Christian day school. Upon this one mention of school, you base your doctrine that the day school is the law of God to parents. And if indeed it is the law of the fourth commandment there can be no exceptions. There can be no reason for any parent not to use the school that the consistory has determined to be “the good Christian school” and if for any reason the parents do not use it they will be disciplined.

But let us look at Lord’s Day 38. Is it so obviously true that it needs no further context or deliberation that “schools” means Christian day schools? I suggest it is not clear at all and I say that for the following reasons. First, the reference to school is in the same breath as the ministry of the gospel so that the natural reading is theological school. Second, the proof text in the catechism is 2 Timothy 2:2 which refers to seminary training. Third, in Ursinus’s commentary the word school here is understood to mean schools that specifically prepare men for the ministry. Emphasizing the need for an educated ministry and our calling to support the ministry Ursinus writes: “The *maintenance of schools* may be embraced under this part of the honor which is due to the ministry; for unless the arts and sciences be taught, men can neither become properly qualified to teach, nor can the purity of doctrine be preserved and defended against the assaults of heretics.” It is clear Ursinus means by schools those schools that prepare men for the ministry. When he talks about the teaching of the arts and sciences, he means those subjects that prepare men for the ministry (remember theology is the “queen of the sciences”).

The mention of schools in LD 38 comes in the first part of the answer. The first part of the answer refers to the institute church and to what is required of the child of God in this respect. The first part of the answer refers *only* to the church institute. The things mentioned refer to the ordinances of the church institute: preaching (the ministry of the gospel), diligent church attendance, the sacraments, public prayers, offerings and the diaconate. So, the catechism here refers to the *institution* of the church when it refers to schools. And which schools belong to the institution of the church? The theological schools – the seminaries. The Christian day schools do not belong to the church institute.

It is your position that schools in the answer refer only to the Christian day schools. You have also clearly stated in your correspondence that it is your firm belief that the day schools are rooted in the institution of the family. But the catechism is not speaking of the institution of the family in Lord’s Day 38; it is speaking of the institution of the church and the calling of the child of God to the institution of the church. And so, it seems to me you contradict yourself here. On the one hand you say you believe the day school belongs to the family and that the reference here is to the day school while it is clear the schools mentioned here belong to the church institute. There is a fundamental contradiction here which you need to resolve. And I suggest that contradiction is the reason why there has been so much confusion among those who seceded from the PRC over the basis of the day school the last number of years.

In connection with your position that the school is the law of God you point out that Christ fulfilled the law for the parent. You say that “the ‘demands of the covenant’ to have a school (Church Order 21) serve to expose parents as sinful in the rearing of their children. No parent can ever say that he has been as zealous and diligent in the rearing of his children as he should have been. The parent’s blessed salvation and comfort comes from the gospel of Jesus Christ, for Christ has fulfilled the law for the parent.”

You mean specifically that Christ fulfilled the law of the school, the law of the school that you see in Lord's Day 38.

I ask "where has Christ fulfilled the law of the school?" It is clear Christ fulfilled all our obligations to the church institute mentioned in Lord's Day 38. Christ saw to it that the ministry of the gospel was maintained for He is God's prophet who perfectly preached the gospel and who is the gospel. Christ diligently frequented the church of God when He went Sabbath by Sabbath to the synagogue and when He worshipped in the temple on the Sabbath when in Jerusalem. Christ heard the word, publicly called upon the Lord, and contributed to the relief of the poor in the synagogue and temple each week. Christ was also circumcised and observed all the Old Testament feasts which things were in one form or another symbolic of the Christian church's sacraments. It is clear that Christ as the true worshipper of God fulfilled all our calling with respect to the church and her worship. I agree with that. But I ask, "where is the fulfillment of the establishment and maintenance of the Christian day schools in all of this?"

Christ died for the church and fulfilled all the will of God for the church's worship. Christ purchased the church's righteousness and thus laid her foundation when he died on the cross. Christ rose from the dead and ascended into heaven in order to establish his church in the world by his spirit. Paul teaches this in Ephesians 4:8-12. I believe (and I know you do too) that Christ fulfilled all the law with respect to the church's life and worship. The institute church's ordinances and worship are what Lord's Day 38 is talking about in the part where it speaks of "the schools". All that Christ fulfilled with respect to the church and her ordinances is clearly revealed in the New Testament epistles together with the apostolic organization of local congregations and appointment of office bearers: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed

thee" (Titus 1:5). If Christ fulfilled all the will of God for all the things listed in Lord's Day 38 so that there is always a true institute in the world with her ordinances and worship where is the record in the New Testament of the establishment and maintenance of the day schools? Simply put, you would expect that alongside the calling to ordain elders there would be the urgent calling to appoint schoolteachers. If schools means day schools in the answer and Christ fulfilled the law of the school where are these day schools in the New Testament?

I can see very clearly all over the epistles the establishment of church institutes out of all that Christ fulfilled, but I see absolutely no mention of the establishment of day schools out of those things that belong to Lord's Day 38. You also say in your reply that for you the school is as much the gift of Christ as the church: "The school is as precious to us as the church, since both are built by and given to us by Christ and his gospel." But where is the school in the New Testament? The church is on every page, but where is the school? Where is it mentioned among those things that Christ gifts to his people listed in Ephesians 4, or for that matter anywhere that mention is made of the gifts of the risen Christ to his people? If indeed as you teach the day school is the law of God, that it is as much a gift of Christ as the church, and that it is the only way that parents may ever educate their children then you would expect that Ephesians 6:4 would read something like this: "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord *seeing to it that ye establish the school and appoint teachers in every city.*"

I suggest the twin pillars of your school doctrine – the reference to schools in Lords Day 38 and Church Order Article 21 – are a flimsy support for the doctrine erected upon them. I have in a previous paper argued that Article 21 is a completely unsuccessful attempt to mesh two things that are mutually opposed: a parochial school and a parentally controlled school. I also remark in connection with the revision of

Article 21 by the Christian Reformed Church in 1914, which revision you have adopted, that I find it peculiar that you are so willing to adopt the revision given that only ten years later you (rightly in my opinion) condemn the same denomination for departing the truth. Then there is also the fact that the CRC's attempted revision of the article to bring it into line with the new doctrine of the parentally controlled school came early in the history of parentally controlled schools. The change in the school doctrine in the CRC from parochial school to parentally controlled school only came about at the end of the nineteenth century. Remember the doctrine

of the school as parochial had been around for centuries. This was the school doctrine and kind of school most of those at the Synod of Roseland (CRC synod that revised the article) had grown up with. My point is that such a radical change of school doctrine from parochial to parental takes time to enter the consciousness of God's people. It takes time and it requires patient instruction. It's not surprising then that the revision of Article 21 in 1914 was a half-way house between the old and new doctrines. It is understandable, but it is still unacceptable.

[Philip Rainey]

March 14, 2025

Dear Philip,

Greetings in the name of our covenant head and mediator, Jesus Christ.

We have organized this letter around the main topics in your February 23 letter, although not necessarily in the order that you addressed them.

1. The Christian school in Scripture
2. "Schools" in the Reformed confessions and church order
3. The pillar of our school doctrine

The Christian School in Scripture

You ask for demonstration from scripture that the Christian school is a demand of the covenant, and you require our demonstration to be an explicit reference to "school." You report that you find "absolutely no mention of the establishment of day schools" in scripture. You conclude that scripture does not require the school and that therefore we have erred in teaching the school as a demand of God's covenant.

In reply, the Christian day school is everywhere in scripture. We grant your point that the New Testament does not use the word "school" to teach its doctrine of the school. Nevertheless, the doctrine of the Christian day school fairly leaps from the pages of scripture. The scriptures' doctrine of the Christian day school is similar

to the scriptures' doctrine of infant baptism. Though scripture does not mention either infant baptism or the Christian day school explicitly, scripture teaches both infant baptism and the Christian day school abundantly. The key to both infant baptism and the Christian day school is *God's covenant with believers and their seed*. The doctrine of infant baptism blooms out of God's covenant with believers and their seed, so that the blossoms of infant baptism can be found everywhere that scripture speaks of God's covenant. So also, the doctrine of the Christian school blooms out of God's covenant with believers and their seed, so that the blossoms of the Christian school can be found everywhere that scripture speaks of God's covenant. When one admires the beautiful flower of God's covenant, one finds both infant baptism and the Christian school among its petals.

One marvelous truth of God's covenant is that children belong to it. God establishes his covenant in Christ with believers and their seed (Gen. 17:7). The covenantal promise of the Holy Ghost is "unto you, and to your children" (Acts 2:39). God brings households into his church and covenant (Acts 16:31). How gracious is our God to lay claim upon our little ones as his own and bring them into his family!

One implication of God's covenant with children is that baptism—the sign and seal of the covenant—must be administered to infants. Though there is no explicit New Testament text that requires the church to baptize infants, the doctrine of infant baptism is nestled in all those texts that teach God's covenant with believers and their seed. God's promise is to you and to your children? Then baptize your children! God establishes his covenant with your seed? Then baptize your seed! God saves your household? Then baptize your household! On this we agree.

Another implication of God's covenant with children is that the children must be reared as God's covenant friend-servants in this world. The entire creation with all its many facets is for them a most elegant book, and God's covenant children are taught to read that book by tracing God's handiwork in it. The occupation and calling which they will have from their covenant God someday will be a noble station that they will occupy to his glory, and God's covenant children must be taught to occupy that vocation with all the skills and knowledge that the occupation requires. And as the children learn to trace their Creator's handiwork and prepare for their occupation, they do so as those who do not belong to the world but to God. They live in the world but are not of the world. They are the children of God's covenant (even as many as he has called) and they must be brought up with a covenantal rearing. "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). On this we agree.

The Christian school is nestled in all the passages that teach the covenantal rearing of the covenant seed. This is what you request that we demonstrate. Even though there is no passage that explicitly states, "Establish a day school for the rearing of your children," the scriptures do abundantly teach that the rearing of the covenant seed is a covenantal activity of the covenant people. The scriptures never state or imply that parents are to rear their children in isolation from the other parents and other children. Rather, the scriptures speak of the

rearing of the covenant children in the midst of the covenant people. The term that we give to this covenantal rearing of the covenant seed by the covenant people is "Christian school." Whether scripture ever uses the term "school" to describe this doctrine is beside the point, because scripture everywhere teaches the essence of the Christian school, which is the covenantal rearing of the covenant seed by the covenant people.

Thus, God's command in Deuteronomy 6 to rear the covenant seed opens, "Hear, O Israel" (4). It is not, "Hear, O individual apart." But it is, "Hear, O Israel." "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (6-7). Throughout the passage, the covenant calling to give a covenantal rearing to the covenant seed is spoken to the covenant people: "O Israel."

Or again, God's people through Christ in Psalm 78 promise to rear the children of God's covenant who are not their own immediate children. They are "their children" (4). They are the children of generations that will be born long after this generation has died. "For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children" (5-6). This generation is to rear the children at least four generations, and probably five generations hence, long after this generation is gone. How can this generation do that, except through the banding together of the covenant people in their covenant school?

Or again, Solomon instructs, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6). And to whom does Solomon give that instruction? Strictly to the immediate parent of the child? Evidently not. For Solomon himself in the book of Proverbs presents himself as a father to the children

of Israel, even though Solomon was not their immediate parent. “Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law” (4:1-2). The teacher Solomon stood in the place of the parents and gave the children of the covenant good instruction.

Add to this the fact that God’s covenant does not produce independentism but fellowship. “God setteth the solitary in families” (Psalm 68:6). Add to this the fact that God’s people are a covenant body in which the members need each other’s gifts to be used for each other’s profit. “For the body is not one member but many” (I Cor. 12:14). Add to this the fact that God’s covenant people cannot rest satisfied with their own needs being met until their brethren’s needs are met. “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Phil. 2:4). Add to this the fact that God’s people tarry for each other in love and bear one another’s burdens. “Bear ye one another’s burdens; and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2).

In light of all of that, the Christian school leaps from the pages of scripture. The Christian day school is the clear and unambiguous implication of God’s covenant with believers and their seed—every bit as much as infant baptism. The covenant of God with believers and their seed builds the school, maintains the school, and brings the parents to use the school. The covenant people find in scripture their calling to rear both their own immediate children as well as the other covenant children. The covenant people joyfully, spontaneously, and thankfully rear the covenant children that God has given to them in the school. The covenant parent cannot imagine sequestering his covenant seed away from the other covenant families, any more than he could imagine refusing the sacrament of baptism to his covenant seed. The covenant parent joins his voice with the other members of the covenant body and sings about their rearing of their covenant seed together: “We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and

his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done” (Psalm 78:4).

Therefore, Reformed parents find no lack of the school in scripture. They find no lack in Ephesians 6:1-4. They do not need the passage to read, as you suggest it should read, “...seeing to it that ye establish the school and appoint teachers in every city.” When the passage as the Holy Spirit wrote it is read in the light of God’s covenant with believers and their seed, the school and the teachers are already there. When covenant children read, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord” (1), they see also their teachers, who stand in the place of their parents. When parents read about their children, “Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (4), they see the school in which they labor together with their brethren in the monumental task of bringing up the covenant seed.

“Schools” in the Reformed Confessions and Church Order

The Reformed confessions and church order speak often of the Christian schools. These references to the Christian schools reflect what Reformed people have found so abundantly in the scriptures. In the Reformed confessions and the Reformed church order, Reformed people do not invent the Christian school as something that they tack onto God’s covenant. Rather, in the Reformed confessions and the Reformed church order, Reformed people confess the Christian school as that which the scriptures have revealed about God’s covenant with them and their children.

First, the Heidelberg Catechism refers to the Christian school in its title. The full title of the Heidelberg Catechism in 1563 was *Catechism or Christian Instruction as conducted in the Churches and Schools of the Electoral Palatinate. Printed in the Electoral City of Heidelberg by John Mayer. 1563*. The full title that we use today is similar: *Heidelberg Catechism or Method of Instruction in the Christian Religion as the same is taught in the Reformed churches and schools in Holland and America*. The reference to “schools” in the title is important, because it shows that the word

“schools” had an established meaning for the authors of the catechism—Zacharius Ursinus and Caspar Olevianus—and for the churches of the Palatinate. The meaning of “schools” was those places where the children were instructed. Schools were those places that had schoolmasters, or teachers. Knowing this meaning of “schools” in the title is helpful for interpreting the catechism’s later reference to “schools.”

Second, the Heidelberg Catechism refers to the Christian school in Lord’s Day 38. “Q. 103. What doth God require in the fourth commandment? A. First, that the ministry of the gospel and the schools be maintained.”

You allege that “schools” in Lord’s Day 38 must mean “seminaries,” especially in light of the other references to the church in Lord’s Day 38: the ministry of the gospel, the sabbath, and diligently frequenting church. However, it is almost impossible that “schools” means “seminaries” in Lord’s Day 38. Ursinus and Olevianus had distinct words for day schools on the one hand and seminaries on the other hand, just as we do today. In their day, they called the seminary the *universitat* (“university”) or *akademie* (“academy”). In their day, they called the day schools *schulen* (“schools”). When they wrote Lord’s Day 38, Ursinus and Olevianus used the normal word for day schools—*schulen*—and they did not use the words that mean seminary. When they wrote Lord’s Day 38, Ursinus and Olevianus used the same word for schools—*schulen*—that they had used in the title of the catechism, which title definitely referred to the Christian day schools of the Palatinate.

Regarding Lord’s Day 38’s other references to the church, it is not at all strange that the Lord’s Day should address both the church and the school in the same breath. Lord’s Day 39 does the same thing. “Q. 104. What doth God require in the fifth commandment? A. That I show all honor, love, and fidelity to my father and mother and all in authority over me.” Lord’s Day 39 treats all authorities in the same breath:

father, mother, teacher, elder, deacon, minister, prince, legislator, policeman, foreman, boss, and on and on. Those authorities are in many different spheres: home, school, church, state, work. But all those authorities are addressed together without confounding the different spheres in the least. So also Lord’s Day 38 can address both the church and the school in the same breath without confounding them in the least.

Regarding Ursinus’ commentary on Lord’s Day 38, Ursinus is referring to the broad education of the day school and not the specialized education of the seminary. It is education in the “arts and sciences.” Yes, Ursinus is referring to men being prepared for the ministry of the gospel. But Ursinus is not referring to men being prepared for the ministry of the gospel in a seminary. Rather, Ursinus is referring to men being prepared for the ministry of the gospel in their day schools. A man’s training for the ministry begins when he is a boy in the schools and not when he enters seminary. Again, Ursinus uses the normal word for schools and not the specialized word for seminaries. “*The maintenance of schools* may be embraced under this part of the honor which is due to the ministry; for unless the arts and sciences be taught, men can neither become properly qualified to teach, nor can the purity of doctrine be preserved and defended against the assaults of heretics.”¹

In the Heidelberg Catechism, “schools” means “schools.” In the catechism as originally written, *schulen* meant *schulen* and not seminaries. In the catechism today, “schools” means “schools” and not seminaries. The word “schools” in the catechism is not up for grabs, so that one redefines it this way and another redefines it that way. “Schools” means “schools.” It is possible that one does not agree with the catechism’s doctrine that the school is a demand of God’s law. We wish that that one would come to see the blessed doctrine of the Christian school as rooted in God’s covenant so that that one would agree with the catechism’s doctrine.

¹ Ursinus, Z., & Williard, G. W. (1888). *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism* (p. 570). Elm Street Printing Company.

But if one does not agree with the catechism's doctrine, there is a path for him to request that the catechism be changed to reflect his convictions. However, that path does not include the right for him to redefine the word "schools."

The third reference to "schools" in the Reformed confessions and church order is Church Order 21. "The consistories shall see to it that there are good Christian schools in which the parents have their children instructed according to the demands of the covenant." The language of article 21 is very helpful: "according to the demands of the covenant." That language makes clear that Reformed parents find the doctrine of the school in scripture wherever scripture speaks of God's covenant with believers and their seed. Article 21 is the Reformed answer to the demand for biblical proof of the doctrine of the Christian day school. The Reformed answer is this: We find the school in the biblical doctrine of the covenant. And finding the truth of the school in the doctrine of the covenant, parents establish good Christian schools to have their children instructed according to the demands of that covenant.

Church Order 21 also demonstrates that the word "schools" in the Reformed confessions and Reformed church order has a certain meaning. Throughout the confessions and church order, "schools" means "schools."

The fourth reference to "schools" in the Reformed confessions and church order is Church Order 41. One of the questions put to the classical delegates of each church is this: "Are the poor and the Christian schools cared for?" So important are the Christian schools that the meeting of classis may not begin until the churches have all satisfactorily reported that their Christian school is cared for, which implies that there is such a school and that the parents are using it. And, again, it becomes more and more obvious that in the Reformed confessions and church order "schools" means "schools."

The fifth reference to "schools" in the Reformed confessions and documents related to the church order is in the Questions for Church

Visitation, which church visitation is required by Article 44. Question 18 to the full consistory: "Does the consistory see to it that the parents send their children to the Christian school?" So important is the use of the Christian schools that the churches of a classis together require that each of its member churches answer to classis whether it is seeing to it that the parents send their children to the Christian school. If a member church of classis is not seeing to it, and parents are not sending their children to the Christian school, that indicates a serious problem in the church. In fact, it indicates that the parents in that church do not understand the covenant and do not live out of a covenant spirit, but out of a different, independent spirit. And, again, it becomes as plain as day that "schools" means "schools."

These are the explicit references to the school in the Reformed confessions and church order, but the Reformed parent understands the school to be implied in other references as well. For example, in the Baptism Form: "Whether you promise and intend to see these children, when come to the years of discretion (whereof you are either parent or witness), instructed and brought up in the aforesaid doctrine, or help or cause them to be instructed therein, to the utmost of your power." The Reformed man cannot help but read that and see the school, where he brings up his children in the Reformed doctrine as it applies to every facet of the creation.

Or, for another example, in Lord's Day 21, QA 55: "Every one must know it to be his duty, readily and cheerfully to employ his gifts, for the advantage and salvation of other members." The Reformed member cannot help but read that and see the school, in which God brings together all the gifts that he has distributed through the congregation for the rearing of the covenant seed. One has the gift to teach little children. Another has the gift to teach science or history or geography to older children. Another has the gift to teach literature. Another has the gift to design class schedules. Another has the gift to clean. Another has the gift to provide a meal for the busy teachers. And God brings together into

the school all the gifts that he has marvelously distributed, so that the poor little Christian school survives and thrives.

In all these places in the Reformed confessions and church order, Reformed people confess what they have found in the scriptures. The biblical doctrine of the school is not obscure but prominent. And the Reformed confession regarding the school is not ambiguous but clear. The Reformed faith confesses the Christian school as a glorious aspect of God's covenant of grace with believers and their seed.

The Pillar of Our School Doctrine

We hope that all of this helps clarify again that the pillar of our school doctrine is God's covenant with believers and their seed. You assume that our school doctrine is based upon a hasty and ill-informed appeal to the word "schools" in Lord's Day 38 and Church Order 21. "I suggest the twin pillars of your school doctrine – the reference to schools in Lords Day 38 and Church Order Article 21 – are a flimsy support for the doctrine erected upon them." But the foundation of our school doctrine is not merely that we happened blindly to stumble across the word "schools" here and there. As we have been saying all along, our doctrine of the Christian schools is rooted in and is founded upon God's covenant with believers and their seed. When we appeal to the Reformed confessions and the Reformed church order, that is to demonstrate that our doctrine of the Christian school is the Reformed doctrine of the school. The Reformed confessions and church order reflect what Reformed people have found in the scriptures regarding God's covenant and the school.

Because the school is founded upon God's covenant, the school has a very sturdy foundation. Any other foundation would be flimsy. But God's covenant with believers and their seed is a foundation that will sustain the school when the hardships inevitably come. In fact, God's covenant is the *only* foundation that will sustain the school when the hardships come. If men attempt to build their school on any other

foundation than the covenant of God, the school will eventually crumble and fall away.

Because the school is founded upon God's covenant, the doctrine of the school is clear and not confusing. We do not agree with your assessment that "there has been so much confusion among those who seceded from the PRC over the basis of the day school the last number of years." There certainly have been those who tried to sow confusion about the Reformed doctrine of the school. There certainly have been those who rejected the Reformed doctrine of the school. But those attacks were not due to the doctrine of the school itself. Those attacks came from those who were not satisfied with the Reformed doctrine of the school and who wanted to modify the doctrine to fit their own will and agenda. We could wish that they had been satisfied with the glorious doctrine of the Christian school as that doctrine is expressed in the confessions and church order, but it is not fair to blame their dissatisfaction on the Reformed doctrine of the school.

Because the school is founded upon God's covenant, there is no conflict between the school's foundation and the law's demand. You dismiss our explanation of the law/gospel distinction as it applies to the school but remember why we brought up that distinction. In your letters thus far, you have been arguing that if there is a law of God requiring the Christian school, it makes the school parochial, or it makes the consistory lord it over the parents, or it makes the foundation of the school to be the law. The law/gospel distinction answers that objection, as we laid out last time.

The foundation of the school in God's covenant also answers your interesting question about how our Lord fulfilled the demand of the covenant regarding the school. You write many wonderful things about Jesus fulfilling the law of worship for us. But your question about Jesus fulfilling the demand of the covenant regarding the school is meant to prove that the school cannot be the demand of the covenant after all. The reasoning goes that Jesus fulfilled the whole

law of God for us; but Jesus never established, maintained, or used a school; therefore the school must not have been God's law for us. But would not your own doctrine about parents rearing their children run into the same problem? Jesus fulfilled the whole law of God for us; but Jesus was never a parent with children to rear; therefore God's law must not include rearing one's children in the fear of the Lord. Or again, how did Jesus fulfil the law for wives to submit to their husbands? Or again, how did Jesus fulfil the law for mothers to be keepers at home? Examples could be multiplied.

The answer to all these questions lies in the truth that Jesus is the head and mediator of the covenant. Jesus lived perfectly in the covenant with God on our behalf. Jesus perfectly loved God and Jesus perfectly loved his brethren. The whole law is love, and Jesus fulfilled the whole law of love. The whole demand of the covenant is love, and Jesus fulfilled the whole demand of the covenant of love. Even though Jesus did not occupy every station in this life—wife or parent, for example—he fulfilled the entire law for his people in every station by his perfect love. “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Gal. 5:14).

The foundation of the school in God's covenant also answers your concern about exceptions to the rule. “And if indeed [the school] is the law of fourth commandment there can be no exceptions. There can be no reason for any parent not to use the school that the consistory has determined to be ‘the good Christian school’ and if for any reason the parents do not use it they will be disciplined.” But God in his providence sometimes makes it impossible for his people to keep a certain requirement of his law. For example, God's law in the fourth commandment is that we diligently frequent his house (Lord's Day 38). But God may have given someone a health issue that only allows them to come to half of the services or to none of the services at all. So also, God might make it impossible for a family to use the Christian school for reasons that belong to God's good pleasure

and providence. These are exceptions that God himself makes, but the exceptions do not undermine or abrogate the rule.

The foundation of the school in God's covenant also answers your concern about the CRC's weakness in 1914 when it revised Article 21 of the church order. The CRC may well have been weak in 1914, but the foundation of the school in God's covenant of grace had been the Reformed approach to the school long before the CRC of 1914. We take it as self-evident that the Reformed faith since the time of the Reformation with Luther and Calvin, through the Dutch Reformed church in the Netherlands, through the *Afscheiding* of 1834, and through the formation of the CRC in 1857 had a high regard for the Christian day school exactly because of their high regard for God's covenant with believers and their seed. If this is not self-evident, we would be happy to direct your attention to articles that trace some of this history of the Christian school.

Conclusion

Brother, we desire to be united in our doctrine of the Christian school. We encourage you to read scripture through the lens of God's covenant of grace with believers and their seed, which is the Reformed way to read scripture. We know that when it comes to infant baptism you do not read scripture like a Baptist but like a Reformed man, with an eye to God's covenant of grace with believers and their seed. We encourage you in the matter of the Christian rearing of the covenant seed by God's covenant people that you not read scripture like a Baptist but like a Reformed man, with an eye to God's covenant of grace with believers and their seed. And if you have any question about how the Reformed faith reads scripture in the matter of the rearing of the covenant seed, we encourage you to let the Reformed creeds and the Reformed church order instruct you in what they have found: “schools.”

In Christ's service,
Deacon Van Baren
Rev. Lanning

Article CI: The New King and His Kingdom: Melchisedec (continued)

The question before us is: How must Melchisedec as a historic person, living at the time of Abraham, being a priest of the same God Abraham also served, be explained?

There is no question of it, that Melchisedec was a real historic person, a human being, a man of flesh and blood. The typical interpretation Scripture gives of this wonderful and rather unexpected appearance of this priest of the Most High God has led many interpreters to deny his humanity, his historic reality as a man. The church fathers had it that he was an angel that appeared to Abraham when he returned from the pursuit of the Elamites. But the entire representation in Gen. 16 rebels against such an explanation. He appears as a real king of a real city. And even as the king of Sodom comes to meet Abraham and utters him all the spoil, so also the king of Salem goes to meet the patriarch and supplies bread and wine for him and his men. The entire representation in Gen. 16 rules out the possibility of interpreting him as an angel from heaven, as just a transitory appearance. The same objections hold against other explanations that have been attempted. It has been said that Melchisedec must be regarded as an incarnation of the Holy Spirit. Nowhere in Scripture do we read otherwise of such an incarnation of the Spirit, yet according to these interpreters the promise is that also the Spirit shall be incarnated. But aside from the fact such an incarnation itself could never be accepted as true doctrine, the historic appearance of Melchisedec in Gen. 16 militates against this interpretation. Again, it was thought that Melchisedec must be considered a temporary incarnation of the Logos, the eternal Word. But also this cannot be

true for the same reason. And even the interpretation that this priest of the High God was Shem in person cannot be maintained. It is, as we shall see further, undoubtedly true that Shem was still living. And what is more, at the time of Abraham there was an entire company of the holy line still living; a fact in the interpretation of that period often overlooked. But this does not justify the interpretation that Melchisedec was Shem. He was a real man. He was a real king with a real kingdom. He was a priest of the true God. And he was not Shem, but Melchisedec.

There is one interpretation we wish to consider more in detail, because of its significance, and because it is rather generally current among our own people. It is the explanation offered by Dr. A. Kuyper, the great Netherlands theologian, who just recently finished his earthly career. The explanation that Melchisedec as a God-fearing man and priest of the true God must be explained through common grace. In order to obtain a somewhat clear conception of the meaning of this great man we will quote him somewhat in detail.

Bij Meichizedek staat dus op den voor grond, dat de koninklijke en priesterlijke waardigheid een zijn. De priesterlijke waardigheid wordt door Meichizedek niet gedragen als jets bijzonders, maar komt vanzelf uit bet natuurlijk leven op; het is niet het priesterschap nit bet rijk der genade, maai van bet rijk der natuur en wordt daarom aan den koning als het natuurlijk hoofd van dat volk gegeven...

Ook deze trek bij Meichizedek leidt dus tot het paradijs ter achterst. Zijn priesterschap is niet een presterschap der verzoening, het aar evanals zijn koningschap, een uiting van het natuurlijke leven in het paradijs ingezet.

Voorts. komt dit priesterschap van Melchizedek niet op door een bijzondere roeping of openbaring Gods. Die bijzondere roeping vinden wij wel bij Abram waar God hem riep uit Ur der Chaldeen; ook hij was priester des Allerhoogsten Gods; toen hij had voor Sodom en Gomorra verichtte hij priesterlijken arbeid naar zijn priesterlijke roeping. Maar bij Melchizedek is van die roeping geen spoor. Hij treedt op niet als een geroepen uit zijn volk en land, maar als een gewoon volkshoofd der Kanaanieten. (De kwestie of de Jebuzieten toen reeds in Jeruzalem woonden latexi wij in het midden; mogelijk bestond Jeruzalem uit twee kleine stadjes Jebus en Salem, die later zijn samengevoegd; in elk geval waren. Niet geexi Semieten.) Wij hebben dus hier met een preisterschap te doen niet uit het rijk der genade, maar door een natuurlijk ken voortgang uit het rijk der schepping opgekomen.

Nemen wij dit flu saam, dan krijgen: Wij dit resultaat: Zoals Meichizedek optreedt, is hij een priester, die zijn priesterschap lijnrecht uit paradijs afleidt uit de algerneene genade; bij wien van verzoenering ot offei ande geen spi ake is, wiens prieterlijke bediening vollerealeiteit bezit; ze is: wel ouzuiver (want hoe zou de gevallen mensch het preisterschap voortzetten?), van binnen uitgehold, van geetelijk leven. Ontbloot—maar toch ecu laatste gloor van het preisterschap door God zeif in het paradijs ingesteld. Hiei hebben wij voor 't laats in deze annrninnige [?] verschijning een spoor van 't scheppings-priesterschap, dat daarna verdwijnt in 't

heidendom om 'Gott widrig' te worden. (Dictaten Dogmatiek III Locus de Christo, ch. V. pp. 91, 92).¹

The same presentation we find in *De Gemeene Gratie* of the same author. There he writes:

De apostel roept dan ook al de macht der taal te huip, just om die meerderheid, die verhevenheid, die uitnemendheid van Meichizedek to doen uitkomen. Hij prijst hem als priester des Allerhoogsten, als koning des vredes, als koning der gerechtigheid; wijst er op, hoe zijns ecu koningschap en priesterschap was, dat niet hing, noch aan ziju. Vader of moeder, noch aan de geslachtsrekening van zijn afkomst; dat niet begon en geen einde zou hebben; hoe hij meer dan Abraham, Aaron en David, deswege den Zone Gods gelijk, en alzo zijn voorbeeld en afschaduwing was; en dat koningschap en priesterschap, in hem tot een verbonden, of derhalve niet uit een particuliere heilsdaad, maar uit de oorspronkelijke scheppings-sordinantie was opgekomen...

Ge moet om, en het verhaal van Gen. 14 en Hebr. 6 en 7 te verstaan onverbiddelijk vasthouden aan de wezenlijkheid van het geschiedkundig bericht, dat er destijds in Salem, het latere Jeruzalem, een vorst regeerde, die God nog vreesde, die naar het oorspronkelijk 'bestel nog de koninglijke met de priesterlijke waaidigheid in zijn eigen persoon verenigde, en die, deze priesterlijke waardigheid bezat, niet krachtens een bijzondere heilsopenbaring, maar krachtens die ooi'spronkelijke shepping-

¹ English translation: It stands on the foreground in Melchizedek that the royal and priestly office are one. The priestly office is not borne by Melchizedek as something special but arises of itself from the natural life; it is not the priesthood from the kingdom of grace but from the kingdom of nature and is, therefore, given to the king as the natural head of that nation.

This feature in Melchizedek also leads back to paradise. His priesthood is not a priesthood of atonement but, like his kingship, is an expression of the natural life embedded in paradise.

Furthermore, this priesthood of Melchizedek does not arise through a special calling or revelation from God. We do find that special calling in Abram, where God called him from Ur of the Chaldees; he too was priest of the Most High God, when he had performed his priestly work according to his priestly calling for Sodom and Gomorrah. But in Melchizedek there is no trace of that calling. He does not act as one called from his people and country but as an ordinary national leader of the Canaanites. (The question whether the Jebusites were already living in Jerusalem at that time is a moot point; Jerusalem possibly consisted of two small towns, Jebus and Salem, which were later merged; in any case, they were not Semites.) We are dealing here with a ministry that is not from the kingdom of grace but that came through a natural progression from the kingdom of creation.

If we put this together, then we get this result: As Melchizedek appears, he is a priest who derives his priesthood directly from paradise through common grace; in whom there is no trace of atonement or sacrifice, whose priestly ministry is fully explained by natural reality; it is surely impure (for how could fallen man continue the priesthood?), hollowed out of spiritual life. Void—but still the last glimmer of the priesthood instituted by God himself in paradise. Here we have for the last time in this appearance a trace of the creation priesthood, which then disappears into paganism.

(Translation done by Google Translate, with slight editing. Some of the Dutch words are quite corrupted in the copy from which the editor is working, so there is a bit of guesswork here and there.)

sordinantie, die den mensch als mensch opriep, om in den naam des Heeren als koning te regeeren over zijn schepping. ‘Hem als priester het offer’ van liefde en lof to mengen, en als profeet zijn naam te verkondigen. De Zegen, dien Meichizedek over Abraham uitsprak was dan ook de puisterlijke zegen, en door het geven van de tienden heft Abraham hem als priester geerd. (pp 332, 333).²

Man could be king over all the earth under God. This, therefore, is a fundamental truth.

The conception is further that sin, indeed, marred this original priesthood, and would have destroyed it immediately, were it not for the intervention of what Dr. Kuyper calls common grace. Just because of the latter it was temporarily continued. Outside, therefore, of the holy seed, apart from Christ and his priesthood, there still existed a true priesthood of the Most High God. It was a remnant of the original priesthood of creation.

Of this remnant of the original priesthood of creation we find a last glorious manifestation in Melchisedec. He was priest of the Most High God. He ruled over God’s world as king. He gave thanks and love and praise to the Most High God. And this priesthood was directly to be traced, not over Shem and Noah and Seth to the power of the Seed of the woman; but even over sin and corruption to Adam in paradise. And the power that preserved this priesthood is that of common grace.

We cannot accept this interpretation. We believe that it must lead either to a denial of the priesthood of Melchisedec, or if the significance and reality of that priesthood in all its significance is maintained, to a natural religion and the denial of the necessity of special grace. Of course, Dr. Kuyper draws neither of these conclusions. But either of these seems inevitable.

—Grand Rapids, Mich.



² English translation: The apostle therefore calls upon all the power of language to help, precisely to bring out that superiority, that exaltation, that excellence of Melchizedek. He praises him as priest of the Most High, as king of peace, as king of righteousness; points out how his kingship and priesthood were one, which did not depend on his father or mother, nor on the genealogy of his descent; which had no beginning and would have no end; how he was more than Abraham, Aaron, and David, and therefore equal to the Son of God, and thus his type and shadow; and that kingship and priesthood had arisen in him as a covenant, and not from a particular act of salvation but from the original ordinance of creation...

In order to understand Gen. 14 and Heb. 6 and 7, you must adhere relentlessly to the truth of the historical report, that at that time in Salem, which would later be Jerusalem, there reigned a prince who still served God, who, according to the original order, still united the kingly with the priestly office in his own person, and who possessed this priestly office not by virtue of a special revelation of salvation but by virtue of that original ordinance of creation, which called man as man to rule in the Lord’s sight as king over his creation. To him as priest the sacrifice of love and praise; and as prophet, to proclaim his name. The blessing that Melchizedek pronounced over Abraham was therefore the greater blessing, and by giving tithes Abraham honored him as priest.

(Translation done by Google Translate, with slight editing. Some of the Dutch words are quite corrupted in the copy from which the editor is working, so there is a bit of guesswork here and there.)