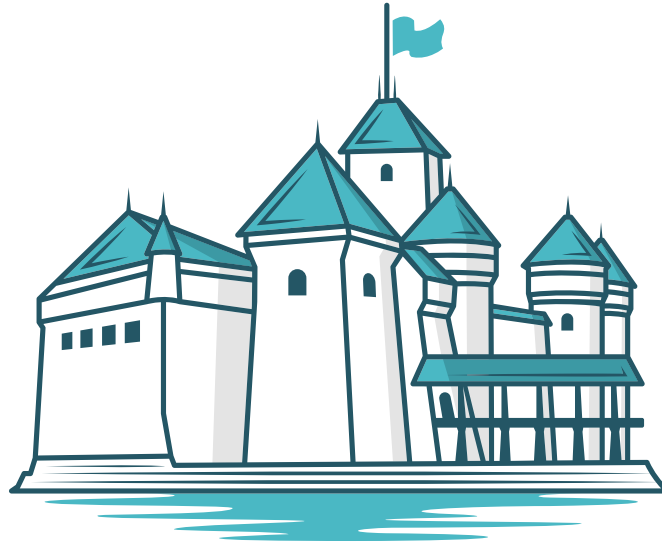




REFORMED

— P A V I L I O N —

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 23

SEPTEMBER 12, 2026

*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*

CONTENTS

3 MEDITATION Israel's Willing Offering

5 FROM THE EDITOR

5 CANONS OF DORDT Historical Background of the Canons (6)



Editor: Rev. Andrew Lanning
From the Ramparts Editor: Dewey Engelsma

See reformedpavilion.com for all contact and subscription information.

And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the LORD commanded, saying, Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, and oil for the light, and spices for anointing oil, and for the sweet incense, and onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod, and for the breastplate. And every wise hearted among you shall come, and make all that the LORD hath commanded; the tabernacle, his tent, and his covering, his taches, and his boards, his bars, his pillars, and his sockets, the ark, and the staves thereof, with the mercy seat, and the vail of the covering, the table, and his staves, and all his vessels, and the shewbread, the candlestick also for the light, and his furniture, and his lamps, with the oil for the light, and the incense altar, and his staves, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the door at the entering in of the tabernacle, the altar of burnt offering, with his brasen grate, his staves, and all his vessels, the laver and his foot, the hangings of the court, his pillars, and their sockets, and the hanging for the door of the court, the pins of the tabernacle, and the pins of the court, and their cords, the cloths of service, to do service in the holy place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office.

And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered offered an offering of gold unto the LORD. And every man, with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins, brought them. Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought the LORD's offering: and every man, with whom was found shittim wood for any work of the service, brought it. And all the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats' hair. And the rulers brought onyx stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate; and spice, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense. The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the LORD, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the LORD had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses.

—Exodus 35:4–29 (See also 25:1–9.)

Israel's Willing Offering

Israel's work on the tabernacle would now begin. Fittingly, it would begin with a gift offered by Israel to God of all the materials needed for the building of the tabernacle. "Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD" (Ex. 35:5). The list of materials shows that the tabernacle

would be very beautiful, very colorful, and very costly: gold, silver, brass, goats' hair, fine linen dyed blue and purple and scarlet, rams' skins dyed red, seal (badger) skins, shittim wood, oil, spices, onyx, precious gems. All these would be used to make the tabernacle and all its service.

Why must Israel's work on the tabernacle begin with a gift? Because the gifts in the Israelites' hands revealed the state of the Israelites' hearts. "Whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD" (Ex. 35:5). And what was the state of the Israelites' hearts? They were willing! "And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing" (v. 21). "And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted" (v. 22). "And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats' hair" (v. 26). "The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the LORD, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the LORD had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses" (v. 29). They departed from Moses to their tents and returned laden with bracelets, earrings, rings, tablets, jewels, gold, fine linen, silver, brass, fabrics, oil, spices, and all the materials required for the construction of the tabernacle. They came with so much that Moses had to command the people to refrain from bringing, "for the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much" (36:7).

Why must the people's willing hearts be on display? First, to demonstrate that the tabernacle was from God. If the hearts of a people such as Israel were willing, that willingness could only have come from God. At every turn in the wilderness, the Israelites complained. The murmuring of their lips arose from their complaining hearts. Israel suffered from a humanly-incurable spiritual heart murmur. But at the outset of building the tabernacle, she was willing! God had given the Israelites their willing hearts, and thus all the offerings given from those hearts were of God. Indeed, although the offerings were "unto the LORD," the offerings were ultimately "of the LORD" (Ex. 35:5).

Second, God demonstrated that one of his gifts in the salvation of his people is the gift of a willing heart. God takes hold in his elect child of the heart that is dead to him and makes it alive to him, giving the heart its willing and the hands their doing. "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). The Spirit of God

enters the hearts of his elect people and performs the wonderwork of spiritual resurrection in the very center of their being.

By the efficacy of the same regenerating Spirit, he pervades the inmost recesses of the man; he opens the closed heart, softens the hardened heart, and circumcises the heart that is uncircumcised; he infuses new qualities into the will and makes that which was dead, alive; that which was evil, good; that which was unwilling, willing; that which was refractory, obedient; and he actuates and strengthens it, so that, like a good tree, it can bring forth the fruits of good actions. (Canons 3–4.11)

Third, God demonstrated that his people's salvation is in Jesus Christ alone. The child of God does not even have the right to have a willing heart apart from Christ. God's curse upon sin is death—death that must pervade the entire being of a man, including his heart and will. Sin and death must reign in a sinner's will by God's righteous judgment. But God has satisfied his justice against his people's sins in the flesh and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Righteous before God in Christ, God's people have the precious right to see the kingdom of heaven, to walk in it, to live in it, to love God in it, and to be willing in it.

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (Rom. 6:3–4)

Being redeemed by Christ and having the right to all his life and glory, "thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power" (Ps. 110:3).

Fourth, God demonstrated that his tabernacle is not first of all a tent in the wilderness but the hearts of his beloved people. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (I Cor. 6:19). The people were willing because God had come to them and made his abode with them.

Their willing offering for the tabernacle was due to the tabernacling of God with them.

The construction of the tabernacle was underway. The Lord tabernacled in the children of Israel!

And “the children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the LORD” (Ex. 35:29).

—AL

FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of *Reformed Pavilion* wings its way into your inbox with exciting news. The search function at reformedpavilion.com is now upgraded and is much more useful than before. You can check it out by clicking on “All Issues” or on any individual volume under that tab. The website redesign that launched in April greatly improved the reader’s ability to navigate past issues of the magazine, but it had very limited search functionality. We are happy to report that the search function has been greatly improved. Now it finds the word that a reader has searched for, highlights every place where that word appears

in the magazine, indicates the number and date of the issues where the word appears, and even takes the reader to that page with the click of a button. Whether a reader is looking for an article on *Van Raalte* or *psalms* or boots that *clomp*, he can now find it with ease among the back issues of *Reformed Pavilion*. God is good to our little magazine. As issue gives way to issue and year gives way to year, God continues to provide us with all that is necessary. May he continue to make *Reformed Pavilion* of use in his kingdom.

—AL

CANONS OF DORDT

Historical Background of the Canons (6)

A third pressing issue in the Dutch churches was the catechetical instruction of the children and youth. The churches’ need for catechetical instruction was proving all the more pressing in light of the Remonstrant controversy. The Remonstrants had their own ministers and elders in the churches. The Remonstrants had their own teachers in the schools. These Remonstrant officebearers and teachers could exercise tremendous influence over the children and young people. It was imperative that the Reformed churches set a fixed catechism program for the lambs of their flocks. Synod had also received complaints from the churches that the children lacked instruction adapted to their youth that could bring them along in understanding the Reformed faith. Therefore, while the Synod of Dordt waited for the Remonstrant representatives

to appear, it turned its attention to the matter of the catechizing of the youth.

Synod began its discussion of catechetical instruction by requesting that all the delegates—both domestic and foreign—submit their written advice to synod on the best method of catechizing the children. When some delegates merely presented oral advice, the president admonished them all to have their written advice submitted by four o’clock that afternoon. The advice poured in, and synod’s officers spent the next day studying it all and formulating advice for synod to adopt.

Synod’s decision on the matter was thorough, encompassing the home, the Christian school, and the church. Regarding the home, parents were instructed to teach their children the fear of God and a love for godliness from a young age, according

to the children's age and ability. This would include taking their children to church, discussing the sermons with the children at their level, reading the scriptures to them at home, teaching them to pray at home, giving them notable scripture passages to memorize, and conveying to the children the importance of their religious instruction. Parents were to do this tenderly and fervently and with a view to their children's level of understanding. The officebearers, on their part, were to exhort and encourage the parents—and admonish them if need be—in this high calling of rearing their covenant seed.

Regarding the Christian school, synod first required that schools be established and maintained everywhere with a view to the Christian instruction of the youth. "Schools, in which Christian youth may be duly instructed in piety and the fundamentals of Christian doctrine, must be established not only in cities but also in each village where none have hitherto been instituted."¹

Second, synod required that three levels of catechetical instruction be given by the schoolteacher, under the oversight of the minister. The first level was for the young children, who would be instructed in the Apostles' Creed, the ten commandments, the Lord's prayer, the sacraments, and Christian discipline; they would also be given appropriate memory work from scripture. The second level was for the older children, who would be instructed

in the Compendium of the Christian Religion, an abbreviated form of the Heidelberg Catechism. The third level was for the young people, who would be instructed in the Heidelberg Catechism. Considering that most of the Heidelberg Catechism is composed of instruction in the Apostles' Creed, the sacraments, the ten commandments, and the Lord's prayer, all three levels of catechetical instruction were essentially instruction in the Heidelberg Catechism.

Regarding the church, synod required that the ministers—instead of the schoolteachers—conduct the catechetical instruction of the youth in the schools where they were able. Interestingly, synod also advised the ministers to keep their Heidelberg Catechism sermons in the churches brief and simple so that as many as possible could profit from them. "It will be the duty and discretion of pastors in the church to conduct public catechetical sermons in such a way that they are both brief and—as far as possible—adapted to the understanding not only of adults but also of the youth."² Catechism sermons were not for long-winded intricacies but for plain instruction in the Reformed faith.

Having settled the matter of catechism instruction, synod gave advice on a few other matters. But before long, the day arrived on which the Remonstrants were to appear.

(To be continued)

—AL



¹ Donald Sinnema, Christian Moser, and Herman J. Selderhuis, eds., *Acta et Documenta Synodi Nationalis Dordrechtanae (1618–1619)*, vol. 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 27. All translations from the Latin are mine.

² *Acta*, 29.