

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
A REFORMATION HERITAGE

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Introduction

The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century was not only a reformation of the church and of doctrine but also of education. The principles of the Reformation, especially the doctrinal principles, demanded and brought about a new emphasis on education and far-reaching changes in education. This emphasis continues today among those who still hold the principles of the Reformation dear and who believe that the Reformation was a work of God's Spirit.

Although this new emphasis on education characterized nearly all the leaders of the Reformation, there are few names that stand out, Luther, Melanchthon and Bucer in Germany, Zwingli and Calvin in Switzerland, and Knox in Scotland. It would be worthwhile to examine in detail the views of each of these men, but there is not opportunity to do so in a short article. Instead, a brief bibliography has been provided which will enable those who are interested to read and study further. We will, therefore, only be mentioning these men and illustrating their teachings with respect to education.

Along with these brief biographical sketches we will be giving an overview of the history of education both before and during the early years of the Reformation and looking at the relationship between the great doctrines of the Reformation and the reformers' emphasis on the necessity of Biblically based, covenant education of children. We will also be looking briefly at some of the principles of education that were recovered by the Reformation stressing the importance of those principles, all the more because they are being abandoned by those who still claim today to believe in Christian, covenantal day-school education.

Education in Europe Before the Reformation

Before the Reformation, education was neither widely available, nor of much value. The Middle Ages are also in the history of education the "dark ages." Education, as well as almost everything else, was subject to a very great extent to the interests of the Church of Rome, and so "was stamped with a theological character that fettered it for ages."¹ Education for the most part was geared to the preparation of the clergy, and a liberal arts education for the layman was unknown.

The principal means of obtaining an education in the Middle Ages was the monastic school. These taught grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, music, arithmetic, geometry and astronomy, the first three referred to as the trivium and the last four as the quadrivium. But as the following quote shows, these did not comprise a liberal arts education:

Arithmetic is important on account of the secrets contained in the numbers; the Scriptures also encourage its study, since they speak of numbers and measures. Geometry is necessary because in Scripture circles of all kinds occur in the building of the ark and Solomon's temple. Music and astronomy are required in connection with divine service, which cannot be celebrated with dignity and decency without music, nor on fixed and definite days without astronomy.²

Only a minimal knowledge of these subjects could be obtained, therefore.

A slightly broader curriculum was offered by the cathedral schools but in these schools the religious element was even more prominent, since they were chiefly for candidates for the Romish

¹F.V.N. Painter, *Luther on Education*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989, p. 75.

²Quoted in Painter, pp. 77, 78.

priesthood. So too, the chantry or parochial schools, though meant for the laity, were primarily catechetical and were set up to prepare the layman for church membership by acquainting him with the liturgy and doctrine of the church.

The only alternative to these schools were the guild schools, but these were simply vocational schools run by the various merchantile guilds to prepare the children of guild members for their trades. Even these "were directly or indirectly under the domination of ecclesiastical authorities committed to the theological system of the church."³

The great universities were also controlled by the Romish church and were given over to scholasticism and the picking over of the dry, bare bones of inane and tedious questions. There were a few good schools, especially those established by the Brethren of the Common Life in the Lowlands, but with such exceptions the quality of education in Europe was so poor at the time of the Reformation that Luther had only harsh words for the existing schools:

Indeed, what have men been learning till now in the universities and monasteries except to become asses, blockheads, and numbskulls?... It is perfectly true that if the universities and monasteries were to continue as they have been in the past and there were no other place available where youth could study and live, then I would wish that no boy would ever study at all, but just remain dumb.⁴

This lack of good education was fostered by the Romish church, either directly or indirectly:

...the papacy is not favorable to the education of the masses. It seeks above all things absolute obedience on the part of its adherents. Intelligence among the laity is recognized as a dangerous possession; for it ministers to their independence in thinking and makes them even more critical of the teaching imposed upon them by priestly authority. Any activity displayed by the Papacy in popular education is forced by the existence of Protestant schools.⁵

The Impact of the Reformation on Education

Bible-based, covenantal, Christian day-school education, then, is in every respect one of the fruits of the Reformation. It was the Reformation that promoted compulsory education for all children (Luther and Calvin, at least, thought that girls as well as boys should go to school), Christian education as we know it, liberal arts education with a well-rounded curriculum, graded education, even, to some extent, parentally controlled education.

Actual changes came about slowly and with difficulty, both because of resistance among the people and because the leaders of the Reformation themselves were busy with many other things. Nevertheless, the foundations and principles were laid down and the work of educational reform begun early on in the Reformation, with lasting results not only for the churches of the Reformation,

³Walter I. Brandt, Introduction to Luther's treatise, "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany that They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools" (1524), trans. A.T.W. Steinhaeuser, in Martin Luther, *Works*, Vol. 45, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966, p. 341.

⁴Luther, "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany," pp. 351, 352.

⁵Painter, pp. 49, 50.

but for almost all Protestant churches today, though gradually, as with many blessings of the Reformation, these results are disappearing.

The Reformation's emphasis on and rediscovery of Christian and Reformed education followed from the doctrinal principles of the Reformation. The Reformation doctrine of Scripture led to the need for an educated membership able to read and understand the Scriptures for themselves. The Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of all believers put even more stress on the necessity of an educated laity by its insistence that it was not only the right, but the obligation of every Christian to read, know, memorize, learn, understand, and apply the Word of God in all areas of life. The Reformation doctrine of faith, with its denial of implicit faith as taught by Rome, and its emphasis on faith as knowledge also demanded education for every believer. So did the Reformation world-view with its emphasis on serving God in every area of society and life.

Thus, too, the Reformation's recovery of education was not incidental, but belonged to the very heart and soul of the Reformation. Humanly speaking, there could have been no Reformation, nor would the Reformation once begun have survived without the Reformation's own emphasis on Reformed education. There is warning in that for all the children of the Reformation. To lose Christian education is to lose the Reformation and to lose the Reformation is to lose the very principles on which Christian education is based. Let us not fail to heed that warning!

The Leaders of the Reformation and Their Work in Education: Luther

Without doubt, all the leaders of the Reformation, even those who were relatively unknown, no matter what branch of the Reformation they represented, promoted Christian education. Nevertheless, men like Luther and Melancthon in Lutheran Germany, and Zwingli, Bucer, Calvin and Knox, in Calvinist Germany, Switzerland, and Scotland, simply by virtue of their prominence and writings, stand out in the cause and history of education.

Luther is the first and greatest of them all, not only because he laid the foundations, but also because he wrote more extensively on education than anyone else. His two principal writings on education are "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany that They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools" (1524), and "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School" (1530), but remarks on all aspects of education are to be found throughout his writings and printed sermons.

He had much to say about the necessity of Reformed and Biblical education, about the great goal of education, about liberal arts education, about curricula and methods of education, about libraries, about the responsibilities both of parents and of the civil government in education, about schoolteachers and their responsibilities - about every possible area of education. Much of what he had to say is as fresh and pertinent today as it was then, and worth reading, not only as an historical curiosity, but as a powerful reminder of the inseparable connection between the Reformation and education.

Addressing himself to parents, he says, summing up all he believed about education:

He has not given you children and the means to support them, only that you may do with them as you please; or train them for worldly glory. You have been earnestly commanded to raise them for God's service, or be completely rooted out,

with your children and everything else; then everything that you have spent on them will be lost.⁶

Painter describes Luther's contributions to education thus:

1. In his writings, as in the principles of Protestantism, he laid the foundation for an educational system, which begins with the popular school and ends up with the university.

2. He set up as the noble idea of education a Christian man, fitted through instruction and discipline to discharge the duties of every relation of life.

3. He exhibited the necessity of schools both for the Church and the State, and emphasized the dignity and worth of the teacher's vocation.

4. With resistless energy he impressed upon parents, ministers, and civil officers their obligation to educate the young.

5. He brought about a re-organization of schools, introducing graded instruction, an improved course of study, and rational methods.

6. In his appreciation on nature and of child-life, he laid the foundation for educational sciences.

7. He made great improvements in method; he sought to adapt instruction to the capacity of children, to make learning pleasant, to awaken the mind through skillful questioning, to study things as well as words, and to temper discipline with love.

8. With a wise understanding of the relation of virtue and intelligence to the general good, he advocated compulsory education on the part of the State.⁷

The Leaders of the Reformation and Their Work in Education: Melanchthon

Melanchthon followed where Luther lead, but made his own contribution by building on Luther's foundations. His two principal writings on the subject of education were: "On Improving the Studies of the Youth" (1518) and "in Praise of the New School" (1526). His thoughts on the necessity of Christian education are nicely summed up thus:

Parents should send their children to school, and prepare them for the Lord God so that he may use them for the service of others.⁸

Faber describes his place in the history of education:

Philipp Melanchthon (1497-1560) was called the "Teacher of Germany" for a good reason. Active in the establishment and reform of schools for more than forty years, Melanchthon guided the development of the educational system in Germany. He wrote the constitutions of many reformed schools, composed the ordinances of

⁶Luther, "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School," in *Works of Martin Luther*, Philadelphia Edition, vol. 4, Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1943, pp. 144, 145.

⁷Painter, 167, 168.

⁸Luther and Melanchthon, "Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors in Electoral Saxony" (1528), in Riemer Faber, "Philipp Melanchthon on Reformed Education," in *Clarion*, Vol. 47, No. 18 (1998), pp. 435, 436.

several newly founded or restructured universities, and advised academic administrators throughout Europe. He also wrote many textbooks, grammars, and handbooks of education. As professor of the Arts faculty at Wittenberg University, Melanchthon taught hundreds of students who as teachers later implemented educational changes throughout Germany. And as the reformer most inclined to intellectual culture, Melanchthon sought to define a theory of education that was based on Scriptural principles. It is no wonder, then, that Melanchthon's contemporaries called him "Praeceptor Germaniae."⁹

The Leaders of the Reformation and Their Work in Education: Zwingli

Zwingli is not well known in the history of Reformed education, partly because his career was cut short on the battlefield of Capel in 1531. "However," as Faber says:

...while Zwingli may not have affected the development of Reformed education in Switzerland directly, he did provide some significant contributions to this important enterprise. For example, in the city of Zurich he undertook to restructure the two schools associated with the Great Minster church. He also pioneered the activities of the so-called "Prophecy", a daily gathering of Bible experts who expounded the Scriptures and contributed to a Swiss-German translation. And, not least, Zwingli composed a little treatise called "On the Education of the Youth".

"On the Education of the Youth" first appeared in Latin in 1523, then in revised form in German, and later in other languages. Whereas critics deem it a loose collection of personal observations about raising teenagers, the treatise in fact contains a clear summary of the biblical principles supporting Christian education. More precisely, it is one of the first treatises to discuss nurture of the young from an explicitly Reformed point of view. And "On the Education of the Youth" makes an eloquent case for the role of education in developing the moral as well as intellectual qualities of the young.¹⁰

Zwingli himself says in his treatise on education:

It seems to me to be quite in keeping with Christ's own teaching to bring young people to a knowledge of God in and through external phenomena. For as we bring before them the fair structure of the universe, pointing them to each part in particular, we learn that all these things are changing and destructible, but that he who conjoined them (and many other things besides) in so lasting and marvellous a whole is necessarily unchanging and immutable.¹¹

Zwingli, therefore, like Luther laid the foundations for reformation of education in Switzerland, the foundations upon which Calvin, Bucer and others built.

⁹Faber, "Philipp Melanchthon on Reformed Education," p. 428.

¹⁰Faber, "Huldrych Zwingli on Reformed Education," in *Clarion*, Vol. 48, No. 1, p. 1.

¹¹Ulrich Zwingli, "Of the Upbringing and Education of Youth in Good Manners and Christian Discipline: An Admonition by Ulrich Zwingli" (1523), in *The Library of Christian Classics, Volume XXIV, Zwingli and Bullinger*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953, p. 104.

The Leaders of the Reformation and Their Work in Education: Calvin

Calvin did not write any work on education, but his contribution to the cause of Reformed education is nevertheless enormous. Both by his writing of the *Institutes* in which he set forth systematically and completely the principles of the Calvinist Reformation, and thereby of Reformed education as well, and by actual involvement in and promotion of education in Geneva and the rest of Europe, he did as much or more than Luther. Not only that, but in his understanding of baptism, the covenant and of the place of the children of believers in the covenant, he gave to the church and to parents the greatest of all motives for the establishment of Christian schools for their children.

His practical contribution to education has been described thus:

Calvin himself put a great deal of effort into the founding of the Genevan Academy; he campaigned for funds, established the curriculum, set the regulations, and was one of the lecturers. Under Calvinist auspices the University of Heidelberg was reformed, and new universities were founded at Edinburgh, Cambridge (Emmanuel College), Leiden, Franeker, Groningen, Amsterdam, Utrecht, Nimes, Montpellier, Montauban, Saumur, and Sedan.¹²

The Ecclesiastical Ordinances of 1541 and their demand for the "Establishment of a College," reflect Calvin's commitment to the cause of education:

But since it is possible to profit from such teaching (of theology) only if in the first place there is instruction in the languages and humanities, and since also there is need to raise up seed for the future so that the Church is not left desolate to our children, it will be necessary to build a college for the purpose of instructing them, with a view to preparing them both for the ministry and for civil government.

First of all it will be necessary to allocate a place both the giving of lessons and for the housing of the children and others who wish to benefit, to have a learned and experienced man in charge both of the house and of the studies who himself can also teach, and to engage and hire him with the provision that under his charge he shall have teachers both of languages and of dialectic, if possible. Again, there will be need of young men for teaching the little children, which we wish and order to be done.

All such persons shall be subject to ecclesiastical discipline, like the ministers.

There is to be no other school in the city for little children, but the girls shall have their school separate, as has been the case hitherto.¹³

The Leaders of the Reformation and Their Work in Education: Bucer

Bucer, the reformer of Strasbourg, also made a notable contribution to the Reformed cause in his book, *De Regno Christi (The Reign of Christ)*. Though not as such a treatise on the subject

¹²*Christian Liberal Arts Education: Report of the Calvin College Curriculum Study Committee, 1970*, Grand Rapids: Calvin College and W. B. Eerdmans, 1970, p. 12.

¹³Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, ed., "1541 Ecclesiastical Ordinances," in *The Register of the Company of Pastors of Geneva in the Time of Calvin*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1966, p. 41.

of Christian education, but rather on the kingdom, it nevertheless has a great deal to say about Christian education inasmuch as Bucer deemed education essential to the establishment and maintenance of Christ's kingdom.

Bucer begins by defining the kingdom as:

...that administration and care of the eternal life of God's elect, by which this very Lord and King of Heaven by his doctrine and discipline, administered by suitable ministers chosen for this very purpose, gathers to himself his elect, those dispersed throughout the world who are his but whom he nonetheless will to be subject to the powers of this world. He incorporates them into himself and his Church and so governs them in it that purged more fully day by day from sins, they live well and happily both here and in the time to come.¹⁴

After having examined every other aspect of the kingdom, its names, its history, its relation to the kingdoms of this world, its restoration and the necessity of its restoration and reformation, Bucer comes finally to the drawing up of a series of fourteen laws that were necessary for the "care and preservation of Christ's religion. The very first of these laws is: "Children must be catechized and educated for God." This Bucer explains thus:

And first, just as all by most holy Baptism have been made members of Christ's Kingdom and then received the covenant of eternal salvation, so Your Royal Majesty (Bucer believed that this was the responsibility of the civil magistrate, R.H.) Will make a law that orders parents to educate and establish their children in Christ's faith and obedience with great care, with a just penalty appointed for those who themselves infect their children with either false doctrine or bad morals or permit them to be infected by others.¹⁵

The eighth law again mentions education and is titled: "The Civil Education of Youth and the Suppression of Idleness."

Although the Lord promises that he will deal kindly "to a thousand generations with those who love him and keep his commandments" (Deut. 7:9), i.e. give them a very long succession of children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren whom he destines for virtue and piety, and that "to those who seek first his kingdom and righteousness he will add all other things" as liberally as possible (Matt. 6:33), he nevertheless demands that not only every private person but also every state and commonwealth should educate, form, and train its children for him with utmost care, and adapt each of them to those skills and activities for which the Lord himself has created each to be most suited.¹⁶

This same law includes instructions for the appointment of schoolmasters and curricula.

The Leaders of the Reformation and Their Work in Education: Knox

¹⁴Martin Bucer, *De Regno Christi*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1998, p. 225.

¹⁵Bucer, p. 280.

¹⁶Bucer, p. 332.

Like Calvin and Bucer, Knox did not write any treatises on education. Nevertheless, he was actively engaged in the reformation of education in Scotland. Having been well taught in that "most perfect school of Christ on earth" in Geneva, he brought back what he had learned to Scotland and never let it remain a matter of mere theory. Greaves says:

Knox's proposals for educational reform, developed in conjunction with his Scottish colleagues, surely stand comparison with the educational views of other Protestant leaders. In matters of education as in poor relief, the influence of Knox casts a long shadow.¹⁷

The Church of Scotland's "Book of Discipline" (1560), of which Knox was one of the authors, speaks clearly and in detail of the need for Christian schools and schoolmasters, of compulsory education, of a curriculum, of the different grades of education, even of the salaries of the school staff. The section on "The Necessity of Schools" begins:

Seeing that God has determined that his church here in earth shall be taught not by angels but by men; and seeing that men are born ignorant of all godliness; and seeing, also, that God now ceases to illuminate men miraculously, suddenly changing them, as that he did his apostles and others in the primitive church: of necessity it is that your honours be most careful for the virtuous education and godly upbringing of the youth of this realm, if either ye now thirst unfeignedly [for] the advancement of Christ's glory, or yet desire the continuance of his benefits to the generation following. For as the youth must succeed to us, so we ought to be careful that they have the knowledge and erudition to profit and comfort that which ought to be most dear to us-to wit, the church and spouse of the Lord Jesus.¹⁸

Important Reformation Educational Principles

These men were in great measure agreed on the basic principles of Christian education. These principles not only motivated and guided them in their work, but remain the fundamental principles of Christian education up to the present. That is only to say, of course, that their principles were Biblical. We mention especially three of those principles.

First, all the reformers insisted that the education of children must be religious education. Luther said:

I would advise no one to send his child where the Holy Scriptures are not supreme... I greatly fear that the universities, unless they teach the Holy Scriptures diligently and impress them on the young students, are wide gates to hell.¹⁹

They did not mean by this that the schools should be little seminaries whose only purpose was to train ministers and teachers, but that all education ought to be grounded in Scripture. They

¹⁷Richard Greaves, *Theology and Revolution in the Scottish Reformation*, Grand Rapids: Christian University Press (Eerdmans), 1980, p.202.

¹⁸"The Book of Discipline" (1621) in John Knox, *The History of the Reformation in Scotland*, New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1905, p. 382.

¹⁹"To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate," trans. Charles M. Jacobs, in *Works*, Vol. 44, p. 207.

tended to view the religious and secular as different parts of the schools' curricula, advising that a part of every day be given to the study of Scripture, the Catechism, the Apostle's Creed and the Ten Commandments in addition to the study of other subjects and apparently did not see clearly that the genius of a truly Christian is not that it teaches Bible in addition to other subjects, but that it teaches every subject from a Biblical perspective. Nevertheless they all saw, as Luther did, that education divorced from the Word of God was worse than useless.

This is, of course, the basic tenet of all Christian education, but needs, nevertheless to be reiterated and reemphasized, both because of the difficulty of teaching subjects such as mathematics and the humanities from a Christian perspective, but also because there is a constant tendency in every academic discipline to view the subject matter simply as "facts" to be taught and learned, forgetting that those facts are not "truth" apart from the Scriptures. And there is also the tendency in every one of us to divorce the education of our children from the Scriptures by seeing their education primarily as a means to obtain a job and get ahead in the world.

Second, the reformers believed in the education of the "Christian man," that is, in a broad, liberal arts education which would fit each believer for his place in the church and in society, as one able to know and glorify God in every calling. They believed in an education which was neither merely catechetical nor vocational. Faber says of Luther:

He was convinced that knowledge of the liberal arts - history, languages and the like - provided the best context for the study of Scripture. Not only ministers, theologian, teachers and scholars educated in this manner could best serve the Church, but all believers as members of Christ's body would better know God and His work in this world by means of such learning.²⁰

Luther himself says:

"All right," you say again, "suppose we do have schools; what is the use of teaching Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and the other liberal arts?"... But I wonder why we never ask, "What is the use of silks, wine, spices, and other strange foreign wares when we ourselves have in Germany wine, grain, wool, flax, wood, and stone not only in quantity sufficient for our needs, but also of the best and choicest quality for our glory and ornament?" Languages and the arts, which can do us no harm, but are actually greater ornament, profit, glory and benefit, both for the understanding of Holy Scripture, and the conduct of temporal government — these we despise.²¹

The attitude of parents and others addressed by Luther in this quotation is as common today as it was then, and makes the Reformation's emphasis on a well-rounded education all that more valuable. Those who want to turn Christian schools into vocational institutions are wrong and really do not understand Christian education.

Third, the Reformation saw the church and its well-being and the sanctified life of God's people, which is part of their salvation, as the primary goal of education. They did not look for the establishment of a Christian society, or even fundamental changes for better in society as the goal of education, though most of them believed that the civil state as well as the church would be served through education.

Faber summarizes Zwingli's view of the purpose of education thus:

²⁰Faber, "Martin Luther on Reformed Education," in *Clarion*, Vol. 47, No. 16, p. 5.

²¹Luther, "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany," p. 357, 358.

According to Zwingli, the object of all learning is "Christ and Him crucified." And as the message of the Gospel is to be found only in the Bible, the Bible should provide the focus of all instruction. The student who seeks true wisdom must seek the Lord Jesus Christ and His teaching. For Zwingli, then "education" is much broader than formal schooling or academic study. Besides intellectual advancement, Reformed instruction concerns the inculcation of the biblical virtues of righteousness, holiness and self-control. Not only one's life before God, but also one's conduct in the presence of others should be marked by such virtues. Dedicating his entire life to the glory of God and the service of others, the Reformed student seeks to apply the Word of God in his life.²²

Luther especially emphasized this great goal of education, and what he says needs very much to be heard again today:

When schools flourish, things go well and the church is secure. Let us make more doctors and masters. The youth is the church's nursery and fountainhead. When we are dead, where are others (to take our place) if there are no schools. They are the preservers of the church.²³

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When schools prosper the church remains righteous and her doctrine pure.... Young pupils and students are the seed and source of the church.... For the sake of the church we must have and maintain Christian schools.²⁴

They did not mean by this, however, that education was useful only insofar as it could be used by those serving in church offices, or in understanding the Bible. Rather they saw education as the means by which every believer was equipped to live in the world to the glory of God, and that in this way both the salvation of the individual believer and the preservation of the church would be served. Some saw this more clearly than others, but to a greater or lesser extent they all saw it

All this is to say, of course, that the goal of education is not social but spiritual, not finally in this world but in the world to come. That is something that needs constant reiteration in the face of the growing insistence in the Reformed community that the principle goal of education is exerting upon society a Christian influence so that the kingdom of Christ may be established here and now in in Christianized or Christian-dominated society.

That they spoke of the good influence education could have upon the state contradict this. In the second part of his "Sermon on Keeping Children in School" Luther describes "the temporal, or worldly, profit and loss" of education, but as he says, this can in no way be compared to the spiritual benefit, for "the works of this estate belong to this temporal, transient life."²⁵

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²²Faber, "Huldrych Zwingli on Reformed Instruction", p. 6.

²³Luther, *Table Talk*, #5557, ed. Theodore Tappert, in *Works*, vol. 54, p. 452.

²⁴Quoted in Painter, pp. 132, 133 without a reference.

²⁵P. 158.

One fault, shared by all the Reformers in their educational views was the idea that civil government has the primary responsibility for the establishment and support of education, though the Reformers would all have insisted that the education must even then be Christian. With this we would, of course, disagree and see the education of the children of believers as the work and responsibility of their parents, even when those responsibilities are fulfilled through Christian schools and teachers.

This erroneous view of the Reformers must, however, be understood in its context. For one thing, the Reformers were thinking of their own civil rulers who were either themselves Christian men, or who supported the Reformation and its work. They did not foresee the situation in which we find ourselves where our government and rulers are so completely secularized that they will not tolerate any mention of religion in the schools they promote and support.

Also, the Reformers did not forget that parents also have a responsibility. Luther, in fact, saw the education as the responsibility of the civil government, primarily because it was the tendency of the "carnal minded masses" to leave the schools "to go to wrack and ruin."²⁶ Melancthon speaks of "parents" sending their children to school and preparing them for the Lord, and all the other Reformers of baptism and its obligations as part of the foundation for the Christian education of covenant children. Though they spoke of education as the responsibility of civil government, therefore, they did not overlook the responsibility that every Christian parent has for the godly education of his children

Conclusion

The history of the Reformation, therefore, is an important reminder not only of the principles on which we stand and by which we operate, but a reminder, too, of the kind of commitment we must bring to the great cause of Christian education. The men of the Reformation, busy as they were with the reconstitution of the church of Christ, did not - could not - forget this important cause and supported it not only in word but by their own ceaseless activity.

²⁶Luther, "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany," p. 348.

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