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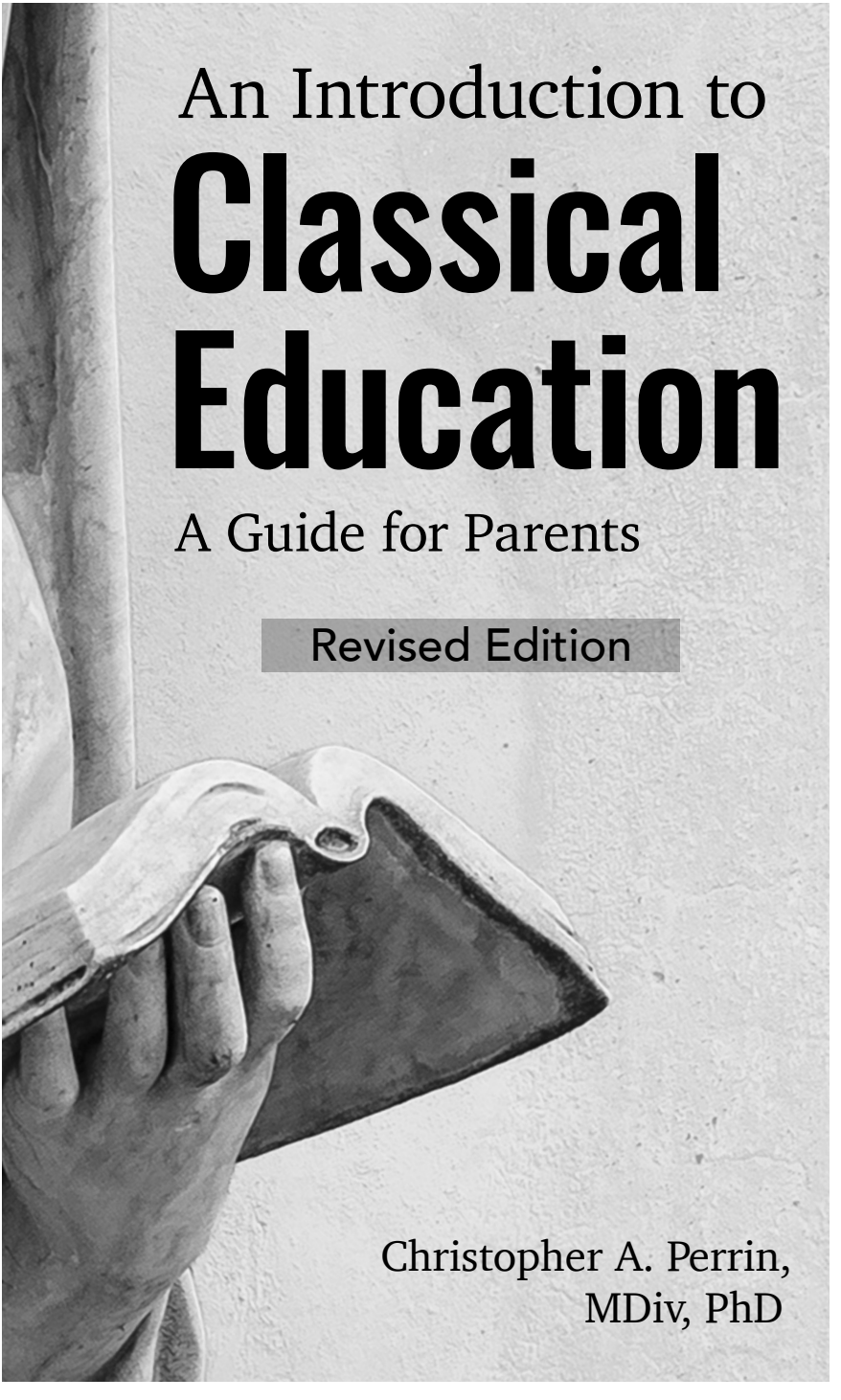

An Introduction to Classical Education

A Guide for Parents

Revised Edition

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MDiv, PhD

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As the former headmaster of a classical school and now a publisher of classical curricula, I have often spoken with parents who are both interested in and puzzled by classical education. "How does the classical approach differ from what is offered in public schools?" "Are there any other schools doing what you are doing?" "How do classically educated students perform on standardized tests?" After several decades, the questions are predictable, but wholly justified.

This book is designed to complement a free online course called "ParentU," which you can find on ClassicalU.com. ParentU includes a series of short ten- to fifteen-minute videos designed for parents who are new to classical education. You might also enjoy another course found on ClassicalU.com called "Introduction to Classical Education." This course includes thirteen recorded video lectures, along with lecture outlines and discussion questions. You can find an outline of this online course on page 69.

If you are like most parents, you have probably heard about classical education from a friend who either has a child enrolled in a classical school or is homeschooling classically. Or perhaps you have read a book or article about classical education or have seen a video about the renewal of classical education. You are doing your research and are interested enough in this topic to do some reading. If you have visited a classical school or co-op, you may have observed a few classes, which raised your eyebrows, interest, and many more questions. In any case, you have questions—and a good many of you have likely put those questions down in writing.

I wish to commend you for your questions, for your thinking. To come up with astute questions is something that, as you shall see, is quite classical. Classical education is a long tradition of asking questions, digging up answers, consulting others, then asking, seeking, and finding once more. It is, as some have put it, joining in the "great conversation." That means reading great books (the *classics*), studying them, mining them, and talking to others about the influential ideas they contain. Whatever else classical education is, it is an ongoing series of asking questions and finding answers.

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MODERN CONFUSION, ANCIENT CLARITY

It is a tumultuous time to be alive. Institutions, information, customs, mores, and standards are changing rapidly. Choices and options have multiplied; our culture is becoming increasingly kaleidoscopic. Such colorful and rapid change does have its dramatic element, and some find it quite entertaining. However, constant change and novelty can themselves grow old, becoming what Thomas Oden calls "the cheap promise of radical newness," which is "the most boring and repetitious of all modern ideas."[1] Many of us are ready to leave the party, go home, and enjoy a cup of tea in quiet. As we contemplate raising and educating our children, many of us have been forced to ask ourselves what we wish to pass on to them. How do we nurture them in the midst of all the confusion, doubt, and conflict of this modern world? Is there any place of rest and refuge—any place of tranquility and strength?

Education is that vast undertaking of passing on the wisdom and knowledge of one generation to the next. It involves discovery but also instruction; it is cultural transmission. With our present culture undergoing so much flux, it is no surprise that education is also in a state of tumult. Finding a good school or homeschooling community to aid in this task of cultural transmission is often a bewildering affair for parents.

Those of us in classical education are taking our cues from a time before the party began. Our experiences are all similar: Outside of classical education, we did not find the wholesome food we needed; we were entertained but not fed, amused but not instructed.

We have gone, therefore, to another place, not too far off, but still forgotten by most. We have gone back to the well-tried and proven path of classical education. It never really disappeared; it just became quite fragmented and diffused, with parts like ruins in modern schools and colleges. It was eclipsed as the reigning model only about a hundred years

1. Thomas Oden, *After Modernity . . . What? An Agenda for Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 21.

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ago after reigning for over a thousand. Many of our great grandparents are likely to have received something of a classical education.

Is this return to classical education a kind of revolution? G. K. Chesterton said that every revolution is a restoration—the recapturing and reintroduction of something that once guided and inspired people in the past. The word *revolution* is from the Latin word *re-volvere*—"to re-roll" or "to re-turn." A revolution is that thing which, going around, comes around again. In a similar vein, C. S. Lewis says that when we have lost our way, the quickest way forward is usually to go home. So, by educating classically, we are returning, we are revolving. To put it more strongly, we are revolting, and we are doing it by going home.

This traditional education that dominated for so long we now call "classical" education, but prior to 1900, it was simply called "education." We call it classical because something new came along (modern progressive education), so now we need an adjective to qualify it as that education that came before the rise of the progressive model. Some of you may remember that years ago Coca-Cola introduced a new version of Coke in response to the "Pepsi Challenge" that seemed to show that people preferred the taste of Pepsi to Coke. Coca-Cola went to the labs and devised a new formula and the "New Coke." The campaign backfired. Coke fans, it turns out, very much like the old Coke. Coca-Cola then revived the old Coke formula and rebranded it as Coke Classic. Why did they call it "Coke Classic"? To distinguish from the new Coke (which they abolished) and to signal that it was something well-known, enduring, and good.

A DEFINITION AND BRIEF HISTORY OF CLASSICAL EDUCATION

I hope you will find it refreshing to discover that classical education, like so many great ideas, is simple yet profound. Its basic philosophy is to teach children important arts and skills in an ordered way and in the ways they naturally want to be taught, despite not always knowing it. Put another way, classical educators teach children what they want to know when they want to know it. When children are astonished with the human tongue, we teach them language and grammar. When children are

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ready to challenge every assumption, we teach them logic. When students are yearning to express themselves with passion, we teach them rhetoric. To be sure, children did not discover this means of education on their own; rather, it appears that it was parents who discovered it, and the children merely ratified it.

We have noted that *classical* connotes something tried, proven, enduring, and good. Since *classical* is a rich word, it deserves some more explanation. In history, the *classical period* refers to the civilizations of the Greeks and the Romans (ca. 600 BC to AD 476), who have bequeathed to us classical myths, art, and architecture, as well as the classical languages of Greek and Latin. Certainly, the education practiced by the Greeks and Romans can be called *classical* education. *Classical education*, therefore, can mean the educational ideals and curriculum of the Greeks and Romans. However, the word *classical* or *classic* cannot be restricted to the classical period, *per se*. As noted earlier, we also use this term to describe things that are authoritative, traditional, and enduring. Classic literature, for example, can be any work (not just Greek or Roman literature) of enduring excellence. Therefore, we can use the phrase *classical education* to refer not just to the educational practices of the Greeks and Romans but also to authoritative, traditional, enduring, and excellent education.

We can present these ideas in a three-part definition of classical Christian education:

Classical education is the authoritative, traditional, and enduring form of education begun by the Greeks and Romans, developed by the Church through history, and now being renewed and recovered in the twenty-first century.

Beginning in wonder, classical Christian education nurtures the intellectual, moral, aesthetic, spiritual, and physical capacities of students with a rich and ordered course of study grounded in the traditional seven liberal arts and leading through language, literature, history, mathematics, natural sciences, fine arts, and philosophy.

Premised on the pursuit of truth, goodness, and beauty, and governed by the lordship of Jesus Christ the Logos, classical Christian education aspires to

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transmit our inherited ecclesiastical and cultural endowment of wisdom, virtue, and excellence to successive generations, thus cultivating virtuous neighbors and citizens.

We could perhaps offer this pithy definition as summary of the three-part definition:

Classical Christian education is the pursuit of wisdom and virtue by means of a rich and ordered course of study grounded in the liberal arts tradition.

Or, to put it even more succinctly:

Classical Christian education is the study of the liberal arts, natural sciences, and the great books.

Sketch and Overview

You will note that the definitions of classical education make use of some terms that may not be familiar to the average American. What are the seven liberal arts? What do we mean by wisdom and virtue? We will address all of these questions, but let us first begin with a brief outline of the history of classical education. After this brief initial sketch, we will come back and paint in some additional detail.

Classical education is old, which is why it now appears so new. It was new when the Greeks and Romans educated their children over two thousand years ago; they are credited with constructing the rudiments of classical education. We would be wrong to think that the Greeks and Romans educated in simple and consistent ways, for there is a good deal of variety in their curriculum and approach to education. After all, more than one thousand years encompass the history of these two civilizations (ca. 800 BC to ca. AD 500)! Still, there are common themes that run through the educational practices of both groups, including a generally sustained emphasis on the study of grammar, literature, logic, and rhetoric. Later, during the Middle Ages (ca. AD 500–1500), the great variety of subjects and approaches present in the Greek and Roman civilizations was analyzed and put into a systematic and more consistent form and curriculum.

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The curriculum of the trivium (Latin for "the threefold way") and the quadrivium ("the fourfold way") was formally established during the Middle Ages. The trivium is comprised of the subjects of grammar, logic, and rhetoric, and the quadrivium consists of the subjects of astronomy, arithmetic, music, and geometry. The words *trivium* and *quadrivium* were coined in the Middle Ages, *not* during the period of the Greeks and Romans.

It is important to emphasize that over time, classical education has *evolved*. It has evolved with some sustained themes and patterns, but not without significant variation. Education in the Middle Ages cannot be reduced to a simple cliché—it too was varied, despite the era's penchant for classification and order. In the late Middle Ages (the so-called Dark Ages), learning began to ebb, setting up the need for the Renaissance (ca. AD 1400–1600), which was, among other things, a cry to return to the learning of the past—to go *ad fontes*, to go "back to the fountain" or "back to the source." The Reformation (AD 1517–ca. 1700) was a complex movement of spiritual reawakening, but it also contained this element of returning to the ancient fountains of wisdom, with special emphasis on returning to the authority and teaching of Scripture. The reformers retained the interest in studying classical languages and literature that had been revived by the Renaissance; the great reformers were themselves learned, classically educated men.

The next major movement was the Enlightenment (ca. AD 1700–1789). In this era, the allegiance to the authority of Scripture and the Church was replaced with an allegiance to the power of man's native intellect. Science, with its various subjects, came into its own, and while most scientists were also Christians or theists, there was an increasing tendency to study and understand the world without reference to biblical teaching or authority. Still, however, most forms of education retained the rudiments of the trivium and quadrivium. Our Founding Fathers, for example, were all reared in the Enlightenment period, but their thought bears the marks of classical training in literature, classical languages (especially Latin), history, philosophy, and rhetoric.

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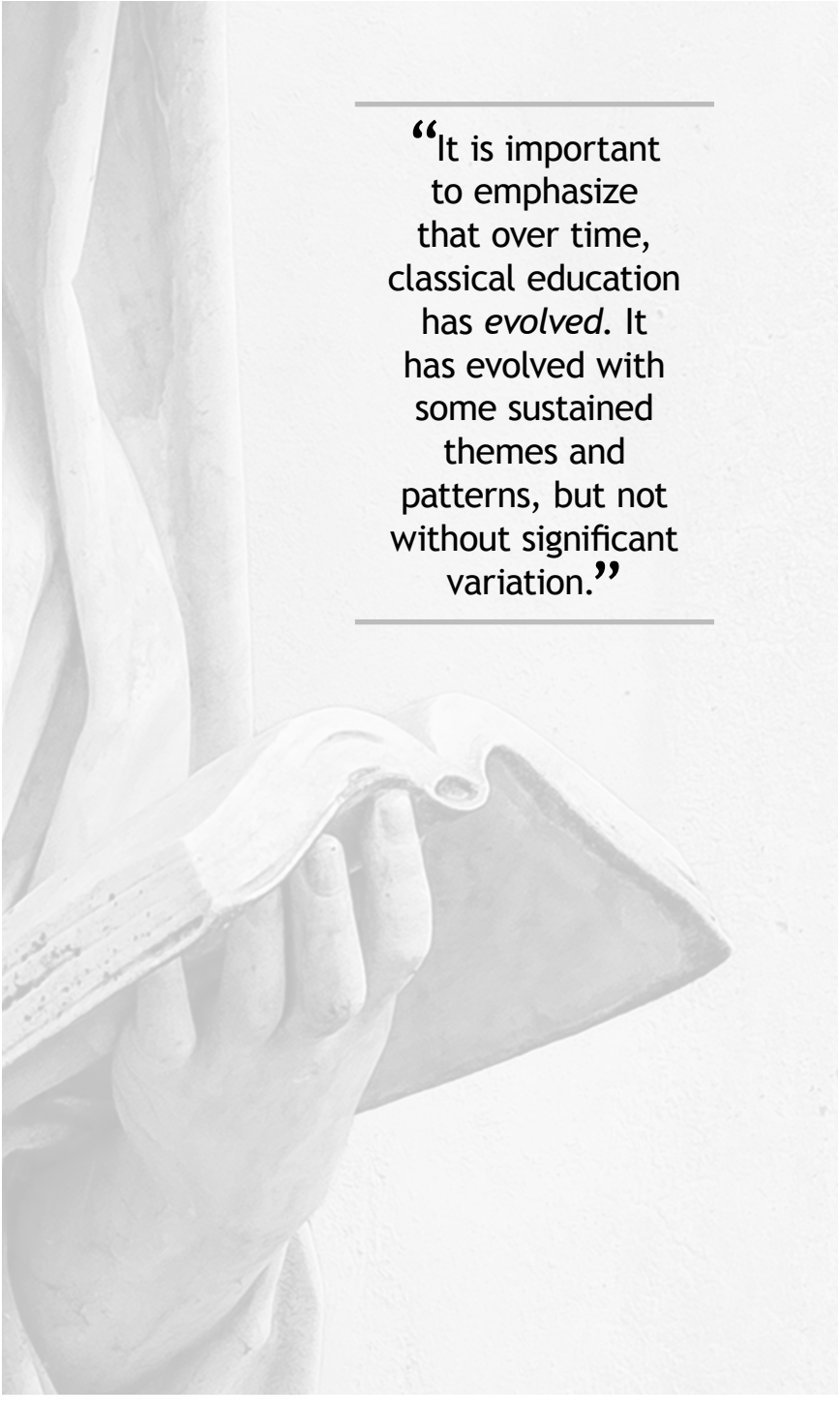

"It is important to emphasize that over time, classical education has *evolved*. It has evolved with some sustained themes and patterns, but not without significant variation."

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Not until the modern period, beginning in the early 1800s, do we begin to see the first signs of the erosion of classical education. Note that even once this erosion started, it was a slow, gradual process, and throughout the 1800s, classical education was still the dominant approach in the United States and Europe. This erosion, however, quickened through the early 1900s, and by 1950, the educational landscape of the United States had clearly shifted to a "progressive" model. Progressive education is the education that most of us have received, making our knowledge and awareness of classical education limited. Our progressive educations make the classical approach seem foreign and novel—even though the classical model has reigned for centuries and the progressive model is the real novelty.

The classical model was too thoroughly integrated in education and society to disappear altogether, and so it has persisted in various ways. We might compare classical education to a three-masted ship that was scuttled on the rocks in the early 1900s and then came apart in the water. We have been floating on the fragments ever since. If you have loved language and grammar, that is part of the classical tradition. If you have known mathematics to be beautiful and not only practical, that is part of the classical tradition. If you have thought of history as a means of gaining wisdom to understand the present and prepare for the future, that is part of the classical tradition.

Like floating fragments in the water, the elements of classical education have persisted, but without unity, harmony, and coherence in our educational system. Latin is still taught in some high schools and English grammar too in a few schools. The study of literature and history are still taught even if they are no longer tied to the cultivation of wisdom and virtue through engagement with the great ideas and with the true, the good, and the beautiful. The mathematical arts and natural sciences continue as strong as ever in education, but they are no longer regarded as "humanities," subjects that help us flourish, grow in wisdom, and learn "natural *philosophy*" (the older phrase for natural science).

The ship did hit the rocks, however, and during the 1900s, we witnessed the result of the shipwreck: the fragmentation of classical educa-

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tion and the gradual ascendancy of the progressive model. Since 1980 we have been rebuilding the vessel and collecting the scattered pieces that are still present in our culture and contemporary schools. Recovering classical education is a matter of gathering those fragments and restoring what we almost lost.

Painting in the Sketch

Now that we have sketched the outline of classical education, let's retrace this outline and paint in some important details. Emerging around 800 BC and continuing until about 323 BC with the death of Alexander the Great, the Greeks established the first Western civilization. Precisely because they established the first Western civilization, they are immortalized as important founders of Mediterranean or Western culture and civilization more broadly.[2] How it is that they emerged as a potent culture and civilization is its own mysterious and fascinating story, which we cannot explore here. The Greeks have given to us the first enduring forms of democracy (embodied in the Greek city-state, the *polis*) and great treasuries of art and literature. Their educational system did evolve and change, but it consistently emphasized the importance of *arête*, which meant individual excellence and achievement. Physical excellence and ability were as important as intellectual excellence, if not even more important. From ages seven to fourteen, Greek children attended both a *palaestra*, where they learned to wrestle, and a "music school," where they learned to wrestle, and a "music school," where they learned reading, recitation, writing, arithmetic, and music. To the Greeks, "music" had a much wider meaning than it

2. I use the words *Mediterranean* and *Western* here in a global sense. Western civilization emerged in the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea and grew in all directions, eventually reaching three continents (Europe, Africa, and Asia Minor). This civilization was then exported to many different lands, including North and South America, Australia, New Zealand, and many other places. When interpreted to refer to only the lands in the West, *Western* may be too restrictive a word. While the Greeks have an important place in history as progenitors of Mediterranean civilization, there were other ancient cultures that have contributed to what we regard as classical education—for example, the Egyptians made significant contributions in mathematical studies, and the Hebrews made significant contributions in formative spiritual and moral practices.

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does today. Plato and Socrates called elementary education *musica*, which we can summarize as "education in wonder."[3]

From ages ten to fourteen, students would continue with their physical training at a *gymnasium*, where they learned how to wrestle, box, run, do the long jump, and throw the discus and javelin. These skills had an obvious connection to military training and soldiery. From ages fifteen to eighteen, some privileged male students would continue their education by observing and participating in Greek cultural and civic life by being trained and mentored by adult Greek citizens. Finally, some young men from ages eighteen to twenty would undergo two years of military training that would prepare them to serve as capable soldiers.

This general sequence and very basic curriculum were enhanced and changed as the Greek civilization grew. Important Greek educators (sophists and philosophers) emerged and argued for various ways of educating Greek youth. Some advocated training for political success and viewed ethics as relative (Protagoras); others advocated a dedicated study of rhetoric that would enable practical political success not just for personal ambition but for the good of the Greek city-state (Isocrates). Still others such as Plato (following his mentor Socrates) argued for the dedicated study of philosophy (instead of rhetoric), which he believed would lead men to discover truth, goodness, and justice. Most of these educators valued the study of dialectic (also known as logic), which enabled students to learn how to reason correctly and detect and refute false reasoning. Aristotle (who succeeded Plato) argued for the study of both dialectic and rhetoric. Ultimately, the Greeks passed down their concept of *paideia*, their view that man is to be crafted like a work of art by a standard of excellence and virtue (*arête*). According to this view, education (*paideia*) is the making of a man, not the training of a man to do things (vocational training). This conception persists today in our idea of the "well-rounded, liberally educated man."

3. Kevin Clark and Ravi Jain note that in the classical tradition of education, "musical" education was a kind of education in wonder by "tuning hearts to the real." See Kevin Clark and Ravi Jain, *The Liberal Arts Tradition: A Philosophy of Classical Christian Education*, 3rd ed. (Camp Hill, PA: Classical Academic Press, 2021), 32. I highly recommend *The Liberal Arts Tradition* to anyone wishing to study the history and philosophy of classical education.

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The Romans conquered the Greeks in 143 BC yet found themselves conquered culturally by their Greek captives.[4] The Romans greatly admired and emulated Greek art, architecture, literature, and education. While the Romans did have some of their own educational emphases (such as a commitment to agricultural and military training), they imported the educational subjects, goals, and methods of the Greeks. Thus, while the subjects of grammar, logic, and rhetoric got their start with the Greeks, they continued to thrive under the Romans. Like the Greeks, the Romans started formal education at the age of seven. Students began their studies with a *litterator*, who taught them "letters" (how to read). After learning how to read (in Greek, Latin, or both), the students' education was handed over to a *grammaticus*, who, in a school setting, taught them not just the grammar (the structure, form, and syntax) of language but also literature, particularly poetry. Through the study of literature, students also learned history, ethics, and politics; they also did writing exercises[5] that prepared them for rhetoric. Greek students studied Homer (author of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*), whose writings were the model for excellent language, virtue, and wisdom. The Romans eventually studied the Latin writer Virgil (author of *The Aeneid*), who was the Latin equivalent of Homer. Sometimes, students did not study with a dialectic (logic) teacher per se, and some students did not study dialectic at all. Often the *grammaticus* would teach students some rhetoric near the end of their secondary study, and usually this would end their formal course of study. Dialectic (logic) emerged as a field of study from the Greeks, who thought that it complemented a student's rhetorical abilities. If a student wished to pursue a political or legal career, he would certainly go on for training in rhetoric, since rhetoric aimed to teach students how to speak eloquently and persuasively—skills needed both in the assembly and in the courts.

4. The Roman poet Horace writes that "conquered Greece took captive her savage conqueror and brought her arts to Latium." See Horace, *Epistles* 2.1.156–157.
5. One ancient set of writing exercises was called the *progymnasmata* (literally "preliminary exercises"), which involved writing and rhetorical practice based on (1) an excellent model of writing or speaking, (2) imitation of that model (often involving condensing, expanding, and varying), and (3) frequent practice. The Writing & Rhetoric series published by Classical Academic Press is a writing curriculum based on the pedagogical principles of the *progymnasmata*.

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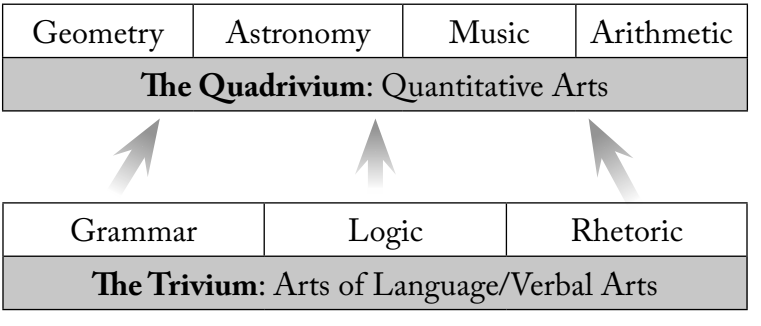
The trivium subjects (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) did persist in various sequences and patterns through both the Greek and Roman periods, and through the period of the early Church, or patristic period—the age of the Church fathers (which began with the spread of Christianity and flourished especially in the 300s and 400s AD). These three subjects were very useful for increasing skill in the use of language, and so they are often called *verbal arts*. With the advent of the Middle Ages, four *quantitative arts* were ratified and added to the classical curriculum: geometry, astronomy, music, and arithmetic. Geometry included some rudiments of geography, astronomy included some physics, grammar included literature, and rhetoric included history. These four quantitative arts were known as the *quadrivium* (Latin for "the fourfold way"), and the seven arts together became known as the *artes liberales*, the "liberal arts."[6] These liberal arts were thought to be the arts (or skills) of the free person, in other words, the arts that would provide "freedom" to those who studied them. The liberal arts were therefore "liberating" arts: they endowed people with the capacities and powers to learn anything they needed to and thus to ably pursue any course of study, work, or vocation.

After the formalization of these seven liberal arts in the Middle Ages, a new, though sometimes varied, sequence of study evolved. The first three arts (the trivium) were studied first (though rhetoric was often studied later and longer) and were generally followed with a study of the quadrivium. The following diagram illustrates the sequence of the seven liberal arts:



6. The early medieval writer Martianus Capella is credited with giving us the canon of the seven liberal arts (composing the trivium and quadrivium) in his book *The Marriage of Mercury and Philology*. Capella lived from approximately AD 410–449, but his book reached its peak of influence in the ninth and tenth centuries.

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Greek and Roman elements of education, therefore, were collected, categorized, and formalized during the Middle Ages. In other words, the classical educational model inherited from the Greeks and the Romans was modified and updated. The terms *trivium*, *quadrivium*, and *artes liberales* were all coined in the Middle Ages. Almost universally, the ancient and medieval Church adopted the classical model and invested it with theological assumptions and guidelines that were intended to serve the Church. The study of theology was added to the seven liberal arts as the crowning discipline or "queen of the sciences." The Latin church father Augustine (AD 354–430) compared the learning of the classical Greek and Roman writers to the gold that was given to the Israelites by the Egyptians during the Exodus.[7] Greek and Roman learning was "gold" that was "dug out of the mines of God's providence" that the Church should refine and put to its proper use. The Greek church father Basil (AD 330–379) said something similar when he urged young students to imitate the bee and read the classical writers with discernment, not lighting on all flowers but choosing wisely which flowers—or texts—to study for their edification and ongoing education.[8]

Following the counsel of Augustine and Basil, students (e.g., Thomas Aquinas) continued to study the non-Christian classical authors of the past with reverence and respect, even using pagan authors such as Aristotle to help create systems of Christian theology. During the Middle Ages, a more straightforward and discrete sequence of subjects evolved. Thus, we classical educators derive much of our structure, inspiration, and guidance from the *medieval* trivium (inherited and modified from the Romans). The Middle Ages also saw the rise of the university, where the quadrivium subjects really came into their own in an institutional atmosphere and where law and medicine first became courses of study. The trivium subjects, especially grammar, continued to be taught by private teachers (tutors) and in cathedral schools and monasteries. Logic and rhetoric were often taught at the university level along with the quadrivium subjects. Cathedral schools were church schools that were attached to cathedrals and where students

7. See Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, chapter 40.
8. See Basil's "Address to Young Men on the Right Use of Greek Literature," Tertullian.org, accessed August 29, 2024, http://capress.link/ice816.

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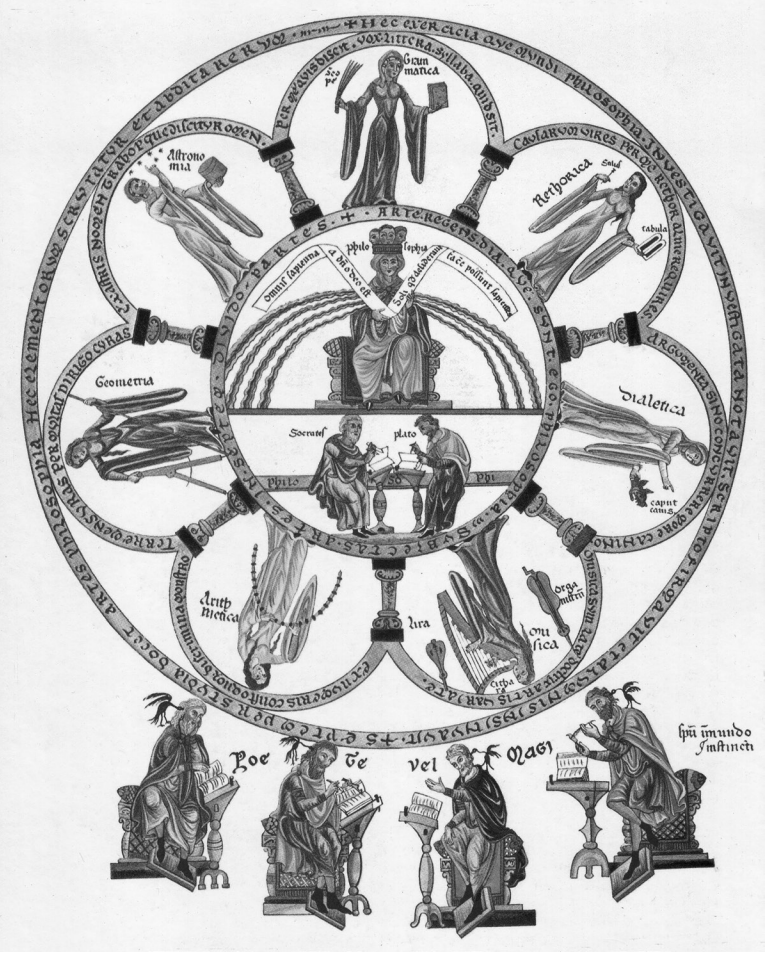
were often sent to receive their education, usually for a fee. Monasteries offered education to boys who committed to become monks and, as they could, also offered education to the poor of the community. Many of the great minds of the Middle Ages were monks who were educated in monasteries (e.g., Dominic, Albert Magnus, Thomas Aquinas).



Philosophy and the Seven Liberal Arts as illustrated in the *Hortus deliciarum* an illuminated medieval manuscript.

As we saw in our initial sketch, classical education continued to develop through the Renaissance and Reformation. Both movements

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represented a return to the learning of the past, particularly to the study of the Greek and Roman authors in their original languages of Greek and Latin. During these periods, scholars searched for and found many ancient manuscripts of Greek and Roman authors. While it had abated during the Middle Ages, the study of Greek, which was very pertinent to the study of the New Testament, was revived. The study of Latin, which had never ceased, increased. Not surprisingly, in their enthusiasm for these ancient authors, many writers began to explore the subjects treated by these authors and began to imitate their style.

Reformers such as Martin Luther and John Calvin started schools that emphasized classical subjects and learning. Luther, for example, doubted the value of certain ancient authors such as Aristotle (especially because of his works on ethics) but still urged students to study Aristotle's books on rhetoric and poetics. While stating his preference for school curriculum, Luther says this about the study of classical languages in 1520: "In addition . . . there are of course the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages, as well as the mathematical disciplines and history."[9] Luther assumes as a matter of course that students would be studying not only Latin and Greek but also Hebrew (the original language of the Old Testament). The reformers emphasized the importance of creating a literate, educated Church that could read and study the Scriptures in the original languages. As inheritors of the classical tradition of education, they took it for granted that students should study an ample amount of history and literature—even from writers outside the Church. The Reformers were also committed to the quantitative arts, which they saw as necessary for liberally educating men or women.

As we touch once more upon the Enlightenment period, it will be sufficient to note that while the religious motive and orientation of education did begin to shift to a naturalistic viewpoint,[10] it is still true that a theological orientation and motive still persisted in many places, and the classical

9. Martin Luther, *Three Treatises* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 94.
10. The naturalism of the Enlightenment assumed that the unaided intellect, apart from revelation or religious authority, could seek and discover all that can be called true. The study of nature, apart from anything supernatural, was considered the only proper source of truth.

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subjects and methodology continued and were adopted by theorists and educators outside the Church. During the Enlightenment, for example, universities began to flourish and multiply throughout Europe and then North America. The curricula of these universities were clearly "classical" and linked to the classical tradition which they inherited. Especially with the advent of scientific experimentation, the classical tradition was experimented with, changed, and modified, but it was in no way abandoned.

Up until the early 1900s, various forms of classical education were the norm in the United States and Europe. The curriculum at Harvard, for example, was non-elective (there were no majors) and was required for all students until 1884. A record of Harvard's curriculum in 1830 reveals that it was a classical curriculum based on the trivium and quadrivium.[11] Great minds and writers up to this time were all educated classically: people such as Abraham Lincoln, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and even early twentieth-century writers such as William Jennings Bryan and G. K. Chesterton. We should note as well that many of these great thinkers, such as Jonathan Edwards and John Quincy Adams, received a robust education at home. People in the generation of C. S. Lewis and

11. The late Harvard Latin scholar E. K. Rand sketches the former Harvard curriculum for us:

> I would here call the reader's attention to a page of the Harvard Catalogue for 1830–1831. My copy is unbound, but even when bound, this volume of thirty-one small pages would still be portable. It sets forth the course of instruction for Freshmen, Sophomores, Junior Sophisters, and Senior Sophisters. The programme is founded on the literatures of Greece and Rome, and many of the authors are listed. But there are also mathematics through calculus, general history and ancient history, with "Greek antiquities," Grotius, *De Veritate Religionis Christianae*, English grammar, rhetoric and composition, with themes, forensics, and oratory, modern languages, logic, philosophy and theology, natural philosophy, including mechanics, chemistry, electricity and magnetism, with "experimental" lectures—all this by the end of the Junior year. The great feature of the Senior year is that no classical literature is prescribed; the ancient authors have been transcended for the higher learning—natural philosophy, including astronomy, optics, mineralogy, and the philosophy of natural history, also intellectual and moral philosophy, and theology both natural and revealed. Modern languages are still pursued, themes and forensics are still required. Finally, we note political economy, anatomy, and Rawle "On the Constitution of the United States." (Rand, Founders of the Middle Ages [New York: Dover Publications, 1957], 231.).

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J. R. R. Tolkien were some of the last among the British to have been educated classically. Certainly, the earlier generations of the American Founders were classically educated: Their knowledge of classical language, literature, and history is widely acknowledged by historians, and it played a fundamental part in shaping the American Constitution and political philosophy. A cursory reading of the *Federalist Papers* proves this point: Writers such as James Madison, John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, and Thomas Jefferson quote Latin phrases; refer to political precedents and lessons from Greek, Roman, and European history; and write with an elegance and style that astonishes us today.

How, therefore, can such a long tradition of education seem so novel today, in the twenty-first century? Well, it takes only one generation to stop the transmission of the past. And education is precisely a matter of passing along what was given to us, or as Chesterton put it, "Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another."[12] The move away from classical education began in the mid-1800s with the thinking of men such as Horace Mann (1796–1859), a Massachusetts educator who worked tirelessly for modernized public education, and was popularized by later thinkers such as John Dewey (1859–1952), who advocated a kind of "progressive" education that emphasized "learning by doing" and rejected many traditional methods such as memorization and classical language study. Although Dewey continued to argue for the study of the great and classical texts, he and many other progressive educators emphasized the need to train citizens for the growing industrialized American democracy.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, various forms of progressive education began to take shape and gradually supplanted the classical model. It is true that the classical model never completely disappeared, and its remnants remain in many places (e.g., in the name "grammar" school), but by the 1950s, these progressive forms of education became dominant. Most

12. G. K. Chesterton, *What's Wrong with the World* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), 112. Chesterton also wrote: "Education is a word like 'transmission' or 'inheritance': it is not an object but a method. It means the conveying of certain facts or qualities, to the last baby born." Chesterton, 161.

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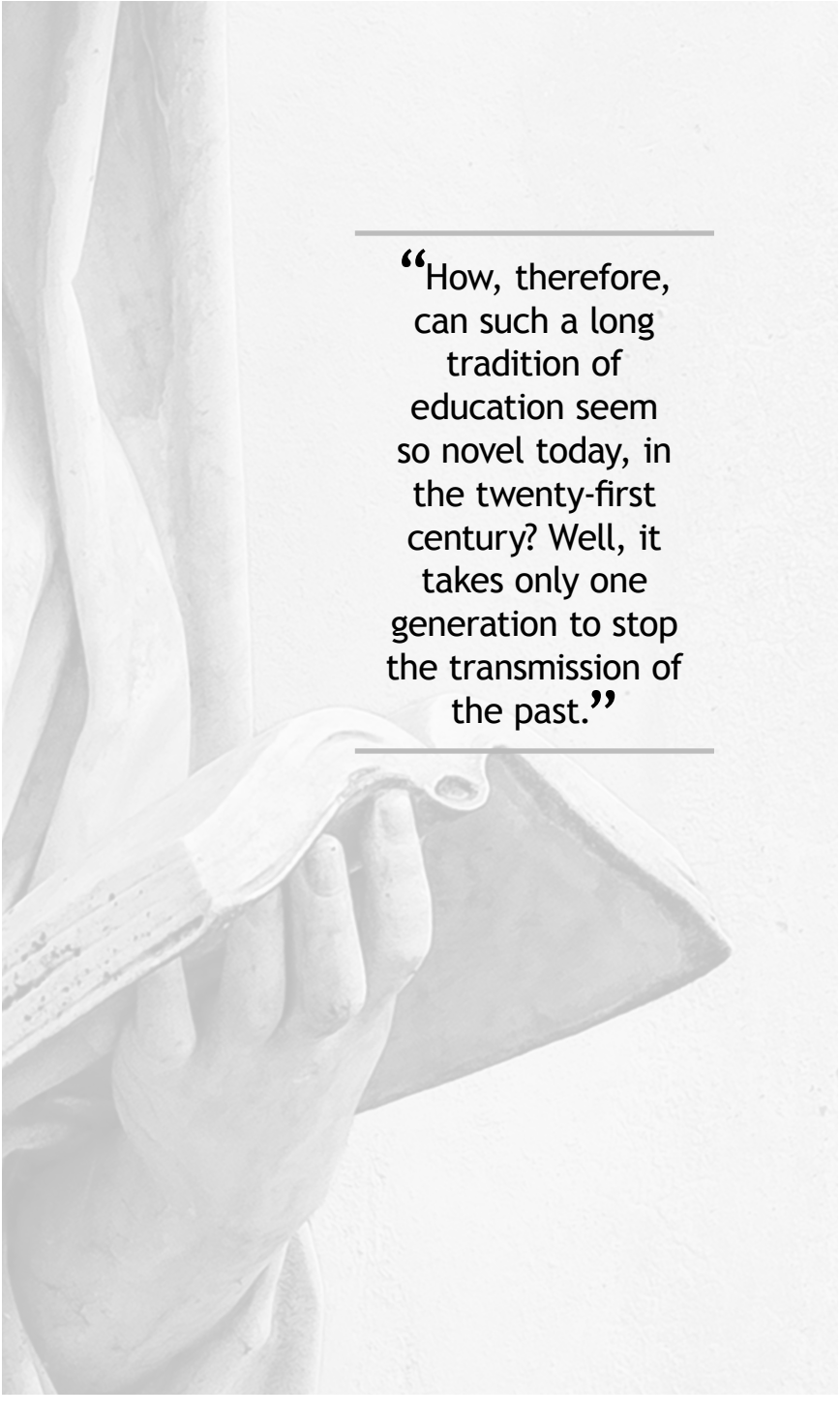

"How, therefore, can such a long tradition of education seem so novel today, in the twenty-first century? Well, it takes only one generation to stop the transmission of the past."

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of us, therefore, grew up under the teaching of progressive educators who believed they were ushering in a superior method of teaching and preparing students for life in the modern, quickly changing postwar world. A few examples of the progressive approach should ring familiar: Classical languages were dropped altogether and relegated to shrinking classics departments in colleges; basic instruction in phonics and decoding was replaced with a "whole language" approach of reading instruction; training in logic and dialectic was replaced with self-expression without fault-finding; writing instruction guided by imitating the masters and frequent practice was replaced with more individualistic, creative approaches and less practice; math instruction steeped in drill, practice, and repetition was replaced with curricula containing less drill and practice and more activities and stories related to the subject; history instruction that praised the noble and blamed the ignoble and was grounded in and celebrated the tradition from which the United States emerged was gradually replaced with an approach that downplayed European and even American history and presented instead a smattering of world history (your old social studies classes). Furthermore, progressive educators often looked back on the classical model as harsh, cold, and unpleasant for students. As a result, progressive educators strove to be entertaining and fun and gradually began to expect less of students in terms of work and achievements. Standards of student behavior also began to change, and schools became more permissive and less willing to discipline students for misbehavior. Quantitative grading and standardized tests as a form of ranking students became the norm.

In the last twenty years, this progressive movement has continued to play out with some new twists.[13] Philosophical relativism (the idea that

13. C. S. Lewis questioned the honesty of "progressive" and "neutral" education, pointing out that even the relativists pursue their own values and dogma:

> The important point is not the precise nature of their end, but the fact that they have an end at all. They must have or this . . . book is written to no purpose. And this end must have real value in their eyes. To abstain from calling it "good" and to use, instead, such predicates as "necessary" or "progressive"or "efficient" would be a subterfuge. They could be forced by argument to answer the questions "necessary for what?," "progressing towards what?," "effecting what?"; in the last resort they would have to admit that some state of affairs was in their opinion good for its own sake. (Lewis, *The Abolition of Man: How Education Develops Man's Sense of Morality* [New York: Macmillan, 1947], 40.)

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there are no universal truths or moral standards) now reigns without rival in popular culture and in education. Its close cousin, philosophical skepticism (the idea that nothing can be known with certainty), also maintains a strong presence. As a result, we have seen increasing antagonism for any viewpoint that challenges this modern orthodoxy by daring to declare that any one fact or ethic is actually true or normative. Programs that assume and teach moral relativism, such as "Values Clarification" (which started in the 1960s), have continued and multiplied. The only real sin in many modern schools is to disagree with the notion that everyone determines his own "truth" and his own morality.[14] As you can imagine and probably know, Christians and their viewpoints (creation, fall, redemption) are not generally appreciated (unless of course, they keep silent and just follow along with the popular culture). This relativism has given rise to egalitarianism—the doctrine that no one can really be superior to anyone else, a doctrine that naturally follows the claim that there are no universal standards. Egalitarianism in turn has resulted in grade inflation, lowered academic standards (so that everyone can get an A), and a hesitancy to recognize outstanding achievement. Parental authority, too, has ebbed considerably.

Relativism has most recently led not only to the denial of a universal morality or ethics but also to the denial of given natural realities, such as gender.[15] It logically follows that people will question and try to eliminate many other given realities. If one's gender is socially constructed, is not one's "humanness" also constructed? Thus, while many assert gender fluidity and transgenderism, some will assert a form of "human" fluidity and transhumanism. Such changes in viewpoint could be chalked up to interesting developments in sociology, but these assertions are quickly being incorporated into school policies, curricula, and instruction.

14. In contrast, Chesterton writes, "That is the one eternal education; to be sure enough that something is true that you dare to tell it to a child." Chesterton, *What's Wrong with the World*, 167.
15. For a history and explanation of the rise of gender fluidity, I recommend Carl Trueman's book, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution*.

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The effects of modern education will vary somewhat from region to region and school to school. Nonetheless, it is still possible to generalize about the widespread effects of relativism that are observed around the nation. Modern educational research and methods do sometimes help us make useful discoveries. It is also true that some educators are returning to traditional methods because of frustration with educational innovation. Direct Instruction, the Core Curriculum of E. D. Hirsch (author of *Cultural Literacy*), the traditional and virtual charter school model of William Bennett, the Paideia Project of Mortimer Adler, various independent learning centers, the rise of independent phonics programs, and even a renewed interest in Latin study are all evidence of a return to traditional models. Some modern educators, therefore, are surprisingly open to classical education, and some are stumbling upon it without really knowing it, bringing to mind these lines by T. S. Eliot:

> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time.[16]

The modern experiment in education, therefore, is about one hundred years old and flagging. The classical experiment is about one thousand years old and reviving.



CLASSICAL EDUCATION . . . AGAIN

If we are to once again raise great thinkers and writers the likes of C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, John Henry Newman, James Madison, Jonathan Edwards, Johannes Kepler, Martin Luther, Thomas Aquinas, Alcuin, or Augustine, we have to give students the kind of training and education that these people received.

However, rather than merely citing the illustrious record of classical education through the centuries, I wish to cite more modern evidence. The renewal of classical education has been underway in the United States

16. T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding," in *Four Quartets* (Wilmington, MA: Mariner Books, 1968), n.p. Text available at http://capress.link/ice01.

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since 1980, when the Cair Paravel Latin School was founded in Topeka, Kansas, followed soon by the Trinity Christian School in South Bend, Indiana, and the Logos School in Moscow, Idaho. Since then, there are nearly seven hundred classical Christian schools that have started and about two hundred fifty classical charter schools. Homeschooling families, too, have returned to classical education in large numbers. There are approximately three thousand classical school co-ops operating around the country.

After forty years of renewing classical education, there are numerous organizations that have emerged to support this growing recovery. There are publishing companies such as Classical Academic Press, Memoria Press, Veritas Press, and Roman Roads; there are advocacy organizations with annual conferences, including the Association of Classical Christian Schools, the Society for Classical Learning, the CiRCE Institute, the Great Hearts Institute, and the Institute for Catholic Liberal Education; there are online schools offering classical courses, schools such as Scholé Academy, Veritas Press Scholars Academy, Memoria Press Online Academy, Wilson Hill Academy, and Kepler Academy. Some organizations such as ClassicalU[17] and the CiRCE Apprenticeship program offer teacher training to the growing number of classical teachers.

Colleges, too, have evolved to support the growing renewal of classical education by offering undergraduate and graduate programs designed to prepare classical teachers and school leaders. Some notable programs include the Templeton Honors College at Eastern University and its Master of Arts in Classical Teaching, the Great Texts Program at Baylor University, the Classical Studies program at Grove City College, the Master of Liberal Arts program at the University of Dallas, the Master of Liberal Arts program at Houston Baptist University, the undergraduate and graduate programs at Hillsdale College, the Classical Christian Studies master's degree at New Saint Andrews College, the Classical Education master's program at the Master's University, the Classi-

17. ClassicalU features more than one hundred courses by veteran classical school and homeschool educators. Some courses are offered for graduate credit via the Templeton Honors College. The initial lectures for each course are free. Visit ClassicalU.com to sign up for a free trial or a subscription.

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cal Education master's degree at Knox Seminary, the Master of Arts in Leadership: Classical Schools at Gordon College, and many more. During the forty years of this renewal, many helpful books on classical education have been published. On page 70, you will find a list noting many of the important books published in the last few decades.

Perhaps the more pertinent evidence of growth is the students in classical schools and homeschools. Their delight and joy in learning are usually the first things that prospective parents notice. The grammar school students sing and clap out history time lines, science facts, Latin vocabulary, and rules of grammar. They do this throughout the day, usually with great verve and delight. They remember this knowledge set to music with astounding accuracy and permanence. Dialectic (or logic) students, you will witness, spend much of their day arguing with their teachers and peers. Perhaps to the surprise of some, they are encouraged to do this by their teachers, who are charged with the formidable task of teaching them not just to argue but to argue well. Most will observe that these adolescents seem to enjoy the process. Parents often discover with some frustration that such students grow increasingly better at pointing out the fallacies committed in dinnertime conversation by everyone present, including Grandpa. Rhetoric (high school) students have already studied a good bit of grammar and logic; what they wish to do is weave these disciplines into attractive speech and writing. Having learned how to win arguments, they now learn how to win people—for rhetoric is the art of *persuasive* speech and writing. You will find these older students writing a good bit in many genres; you will also find them speaking before their peers on a regular basis, whether making a political or forensic speech or presenting a lab report.

Grammar, logic, and rhetoric are central disciplines in classical schools and homeschools. You might have noticed that these disciplines also receive emphasis at various stages or periods in the school. Grammar is emphasized during the elementary years (our *grammar* school), logic during the junior high years, and rhetoric during the high school years (see the diagrams on pages 27–28). Therefore, grammar will be taught in some form in all grades (K–12) but receives special emphasis and attention in grades K–6. While logic is taught during the middle school years and

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rhetoric during the high school years, classical students receive coaching in logical thinking and rhetorical expression throughout their education. The assumption here is that these subjects are always operating in some form but that they are suited to be explicitly taught at certain stages in a child's development. As such, each trivium subject is seen as a "paradigm" or master subject that colors and guides the way the other subjects in the curriculum are taught. For example, virtually every subject in the dialectic school should be taught "dialectically"—in math, science, history, and literature classes, students will be arguing, debating, and discussing. In the rhetoric school (high school), students should be writing persuasive essays and giving speeches in several classes outside of their rhetoric class. Dorothy Sayers argues that the trivium subjects are not really subjects at all but a means or method for handling and learning all subjects—a kind of master art (a tool) that enables one to study any subject.[18] She compares each trivium art to a tool, such as a chisel or plane, that, once mastered, can be applied to fashion all varieties of wood (subjects). While we are used to thinking of grammar as a subject (and it has been reduced to a mere self-contained subject in modern schools), it has traditionally been viewed as an all-encompassing discipline or "art." The same is true of logic and rhetoric.

This point cannot be emphasized enough. Our teachers of the last generation divided knowledge into relatively isolated "subjects" without emphasizing the interconnection of all knowledge. So we have learned "subjects" without actually learning how to master these subjects—we have not learned how to learn. We might say that we have been set to work hammering, chiseling, planing, and carving without ever having learned how to use the tools. We have picked up what we could as we went along, incidentally. Classical educators start from the other end and emphasize the importance and use of those master tools that can be widely applied. Of course, in order to learn the use of these master tools (grammar, logic, and rhetoric), it is necessary to apply them to some piece of wood, to some subject, and so actual subjects must be studied (English, Latin, history, etc.). But note that the chief goal is to master the tools; for in mastering the tools, the subject (any subject) will soon be mastered as well. We encounter a paradox: classi-

18. See Dorothy Sayers's speech "The Lost Tools of Learning" (1947), available as an audiobook at http://capress.link/ice02.

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cal educators favor tool over content and therefore help students to master more content than ever. They have taught their students how to learn.

Emphasis of Trivium Arts: Paradigmatic or "Tool" Approach

<table>
<tr><th>Grades K–6
GRAMMAR STAGE</th><th>Grades 7–9
LOGIC STAGE</th><th>Grades 10–12
RHETORIC STAGE</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Grammar: English and Latin</td><td>Grammar</td><td>Grammar</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Logic</td><td>Logic</td></tr>
<tr><td>Logic</td><td rowspan="2">Rhetoric</td></tr>
<tr><td>Rhetoric</td><td>Rhetoric</td></tr>
</table>

The shaded and enlarged Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric boxes indicate that these subjects are dominant and central (paradigm subjects) during the stages in which they occur.

Curricular Subjects Taught from a Grammatical, Logical, or Rhetorical Perspective

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">K–6</th><th colspan="2">7–9</th><th colspan="2">10–12</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">Grammar</td><td>Math</td><td rowspan="6">Logic</td><td>Math</td><td rowspan="6">Rhetoric</td><td>Math</td></tr>
<tr><td>Science</td><td>Science</td><td>Science</td></tr>
<tr><td>History</td><td>History</td><td>History</td></tr>
<tr><td>Literature</td><td>Literature</td><td>Literature</td></tr>
<tr><td>Fine Arts</td><td>Fine Arts</td><td>Fine Arts</td></tr>
<tr><td>Bible/Theology</td><td>Bible/Theology</td><td>Bible/Theology</td></tr>
</table>

During each stage, the same subjects are taught but are informed by the unique perspectives of either grammar, logic, or rhetoric.

Sayers also recognized that classical educators tend to teach students these tools at certain developmental stages. As the students age and

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mature, teachers adjust the manner and means by which they teach. Factual information, grammar, vocabulary, and syntax are emphasized in the grammar school years (grades K–6), frequently by means of singing and chanting as well as by direct instruction, reading, and discussion. Principles and the integrated relationship of ideas are emphasized in all subjects during the dialectic school years (grades 7–9) by means of reasoning, debate, and discussion, fueled by the dedicated study of logic. Effective and persuasive speaking and writing are emphasized during the rhetoric school years (grades 10–12) by means of training in theory, imitation of great writing and speech, and frequent practice. In "The Lost Tools of Learning," Sayers characterizes the grammar stage as the "poll-parrot" stage, when students love to memorize, sing, and repeat whatever they encounter. She characterizes the dialectic stage as the "pert" stage, when students challenge authority, ask "how" and "why," and enjoy arguing and debating. She characterizes the rhetoric stage as the "poetic" stage, when students are more interested in creative thinking and expression.

The Trivium Arts as Stages in a Child's Development

GRAMMAR	LOGIC	RHETORIC
Age: 5–11	Age: 11–14	Age: 14–18
Poll-Parrot Stage →	Pert Stage →	Poetic Stage
Language: grammar, syntax, structure, vocabulary	Language: reasoning, debate, clarity	Language: eloquence, beauty, persuasion
Philologists	Philosophers	Poets
Basic facts, fundamentals	Principles, relations	Expressive communication, application, synthesis
Method: singing, chanting, repetition	Method: argument, discussion, debate	Method: discussion, speeches, imitation, practice
Writing: clarity, narrative, description	Writing: compare/contrast, praise/blame, argumentative	Writing: persuasive, legal, polemic, poetic, creative

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To be clear, then, the words *grammar*, *logic*, and *rhetoric* have a range of meaning. These words can refer to self-contained subjects, or they can refer to methods or arts ("tools") of learning all subjects. Finally, they can be used, as Sayers does, to describe three developmental stages through which children progress.

PIETY, GYMNASTIC, MUSIC, ARTS, PHILOSOPHY, THEOLOGY (PGMAPT)

In their important book, *The Liberal Arts Tradition*, Kevin Clark and Ravi Jain present a clear summary of the way the classical curriculum was organized and understood throughout the centuries.[19] They summarize this curriculum with the acronym PGMAPT, which stands for piety, gymnastic, music, arts (the liberal arts), philosophy, and theology. This summary complements the one given by Sayers and presents a more detailed account of the way in which the classical curriculum was actually implemented. The fact is that Sayers's organization of the trivium arts in parallel with a child's developmental stages was a new insight when she presented it in 1947.

Clark and Jain point out that classical educators of the past considered education in the elementary years (approximately K-6) to be "musical" education, an education oriented to cultivating wonder and curiosity in students. In their musical education—education inspired by the "muses"—students engaged with story, poetry, song, dance, and exploration and naming of the natural world. This musical education was complemented by an education in piety and gymnastics. Piety is a reverence and honor for the tradition we have inherited and for those who have gone before us. Education in piety involves learning our nation's history, studying its great figures, and learning the songs, stories, anthems, and poems of our people and culture. For Christian students this also means learning about the history of the Church, its liturgies, hymns, songs, and great heroes and saints. Gymnastic education aims to train the body and teaches students self-control, courage, strength, perseverance, and teamwork.

19. *The Liberal Arts Tradition* is available at http://capress.link/ice03.

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Together, piety, gymnastic, and musical education form the foundation of primary or "elementary" education. During these early years, students study words and numbers in rudimentary ways, learning their letters and basic reading as well as basic counting and introductory arithmetic. Only after receiving a musical education do students begin the formal study of the liberal arts that involve grammar (usually Latin grammar), logic, and rhetoric (the trivium) and arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music (the quadrivium).

The study of the liberal arts "liberates" a person by giving him the general skills of language and numbers that enable him to do anything well. A "liberal artist" can write and interpret texts with clarity, precision, and accuracy (grammar); she can craft arguments that are cogent and express truth (logic); she can present her thoughts winsomely, beautifully, and persuasively (rhetoric). A liberal artist can also quantify, weigh, and measure that which is measurable—shapes, figures, mass, magnitude, extension, and motion—as students learn to do when they study arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. The word *art* is derived from the Latin *ars, artis* ("something made") and signals that a liberal artist is a maker—someone who makes things out of words and numbers.

The study of the liberal arts also prepares students for the study of the natural sciences. The liberal arts enable students to study, name, and measure what they find in the natural world so that they can collect and arrange facts that comprise "bodies" of knowledge that are governed by regular principles and make up natural sciences such as biology, chemistry, and physics. The word *science* is from the Latin *scientia*, which simply means "knowledge." The liberal arts enable us to collect and organize knowledge about the natural world, which is why a study of the liberal arts should precede the study of the natural sciences.

At the end of the classical curriculum are philosophy and theology—both of which involve significant integration of various ideas and concepts and thus require mastery of the liberal arts. Philosophy and theology might begin in the late teenage years, but not before. In our setting, this might mean in eleventh or twelfth grade, or in college. Theology was often called the "queen of the sciences" and philosophy her "handmaid."

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Clark and Jain like to summarize the entire classical curriculum by saying it was "grounded in piety and governed by theology."[20]

Another way of summarizing the whole of classical education is to view it as a movement from wonder to wisdom. At the bottom of the PGMAPT chart on page 1, you can see the progressive motion of the curriculum that starts with the cultivation of wonder, leads to worship or admiration, in turn inspires work, and eventually leads to wisdom. Wisdom is the comprehensive understanding of how the world works and how humans live together harmoniously and well in the world. It is an ideal goal that is never finally reached but ever-becoming and ever-sought and loved.[21] Wisdom, along with virtue, is that great, slowly attained goal of a classical education.

LATIN AND GREEK

Classical schools are also known for teaching classical languages, usually Latin, but sometimes both Latin and Greek. Latin has been taught in classical schools for centuries, even after it ceased to be a popular spoken language. There is good reason for this, for the study of Latin rewards us richly in several ways.

Latin is a fundamental subject in classical schools and homeschools. It is one of the "paradigm disciplines" of the grammar school, through which students learn the rudiments and structure of language—of the Latin language and English language, and through them the structure of all languages. Latin words are at the root of over 50 percent of all English words, so the study of Latin greatly enhances one's English vocabulary. Often, just one Latin word is responsible for several English words. Take, for example, the Latin word *porto* ("I carry"). From this word are derived

20. Clark and Jain, *Liberal Arts Tradition*, 5.
21. The original meaning of the word *philosophy* captures this, as it means literally the "love of wisdom." Socrates famously said that if he was considered wise, it was only because he knew that he was still ignorant of the knowledge he sought. The wise man therefore loves wisdom without claiming to have it. Even today, the words *wise* and *well-educated* are words we appropriately may apply to others but not to ourselves—for it is part of wisdom to recognize how much we don't know and how much wisdom we lack.

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port, *portal*, *porter*, *porch*, *airport*, *import*, *important*, *transport*, *export*, *report*, and *portable*. In this case, one Latin word helps yield eleven English words—a pretty good investment.

Latin also helps students understand grammar. As they learn Latin grammar, they are learning or reinforcing their knowledge of English grammar. Our own way of labeling and analyzing English grammar evolved from the study of Latin grammar—all those "grammatical" terms, such as *verb*, *noun*, *adjective*, and *adverb*, are Latin words developed as a way to understand Latin grammar! The grammar of the Latin language is logical, straightforward, and highly regular, making it an ideal language to learn grammar that can be applied to many other languages, including, of course, English.

It has been shown repeatedly that the study of Latin quickens and enables one's mastery of English. Students of Latin have higher SAT and GRE (Graduate Record Examination) scores. In fact, the students scoring the highest on the verbal section of the GRE are not English students but classics majors. Anyone who wants to see the hard, statistical facts demonstrating the value of Latin study is encouraged to visit the website of the National Committee for the Study of Latin and Greek (www.promotelatin.org).

Studying a foreign language in the early grades has always been the classical way (many classical schools introduce a formal course in third or fourth grade) and is proven wise by experience, for students acquire language fast when they are young. Students typically learn ten new Latin words a week, with far greater ease than their parents would. Students at this age are eager to learn language, and many of them profess Latin to be their favorite subject.

Finally, we should mention that Latin is also the mother tongue of the so-called "Romance languages": Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian, and Romanian. They are called the Romance languages because they directly descended from the language of the Romans, which was Latin. If 50 percent of our words in English come from Latin, up to 90 percent of the words in these languages come from Latin. For example, *porta* is Latin for

The PGMAPT Paradigm of *The Liberal Arts Tradition*

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">What to Know?</td><td>Theology[A]</td><td colspan="11"></td><td colspan="3">Theology ➔</td><td>➔</td><td rowspan="10">Wisdom, Grace, Virtue</td></tr>
<tr><td>Philoso-phy[B]</td><td colspan="9"></td><td colspan="2">Natural Philosophy[C] Moral Philosophy[D]</td><td colspan="3">Divine Philosophy ➔</td><td>➔</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">How to Think?</td><td rowspan="2">Liberal Arts[E]</td><td colspan="7">Arithmetic</td><td colspan="2">Geometry</td><td colspan="3">Astronomy, Music</td><td rowspan="2">➔</td><td>➔</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="7">Grammar</td><td colspan="2">Dialectic</td><td colspan="3">Rhetoric</td><td>➔</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">How to Live?</td><td>Music[F]</td><td colspan="12">An Education in Wonder through Engagement with Reality as a Delightful Living Museum—Engagement Both with Unmediated Nature and with the Songs, Stories, and Art of Human Culture</td><td>➔</td><td>➔</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gymnas-tic[G]</td><td colspan="4">Gross, Fine Motor Skills Manners</td><td colspan="3">Coordination, Athleticism</td><td colspan="5">Team and Individual Sports</td><td colspan="2">➔</td><td>➔</td></tr>
<tr><td>Whom to Love?</td><td>Piety</td><td colspan="14">Fulfilling One's Duty, Love, and Respect to God, Parents, and Elders Shapes the Loves</td><td colspan="2">➔</td><td>➔</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>PK</td><td>K</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td colspan="2">University and Life</td><td>➔</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="3">Wonder ➔</td><td colspan="4">Worship ➔</td><td colspan="4">Work ➔</td><td colspan="5">Wisdom</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

A. Theology: As the sun illumines the whole earth, so theology illumines all of education and is learned implicitly at every stage.
B. Philosophy: The love of wisdom in natural, moral, and divine reality; this contains all the subjects (e.g., chemistry, economics, psychology, biology, etc.) except theology.
C. Natural Philosophy: Natural philosophy is the locus of integration for the subjects of natural science.
D. Moral Philosophy: The love of wisdom regarding man and human society; moral philosophy is the locus of integration for the subjects of social science. "Essentially, the focus of Christian moral philosophy is man as the image of God and his actions and relations within the human society he inhabits." Clark and Jain, *Liberal Arts Tradition*, 25.
E. Liberal Arts: The tools of learning; the skills used to justify knowledge; the traditional path to train the reason consisting of the trivium and quadrivium.
F. Music: "It is a total education including the heart—the memory and passions and imagination—as well as the body and intelligence." James S. Taylor, *Poetic Knowledge: The Recovery of Education* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 159.
G. Gymnastic: Physical training and discipline which creates discipline, perseverance, and patience.

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"door"; *puerta* is Spanish for "door." *Amicus* is Latin for "friend"; in Spanish and Portuguese it is *amigo*, in Italian *amico*, in French *ami*, in Romanian *amic*. When students learn Latin, they are also doing preliminary work in these other languages.



Image reproduced from *Latin for Children Primer A*, page 36.

If Latin is responsible for 50 percent of our English vocabulary, Greek is responsible for an additional 20–30 percent. In addition to being the language of Homer, Plato, Aristotle, the Greek plays, and the New Testament, Greek is also the basis for much medical and scientific vocabulary. Those who study Latin and Greek will achieve the most advanced and thorough

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understanding of English vocabulary and grammar, and they will also find that Latin and Greek reinforce one another, since they are both inflected languages[22] with a very similar structure.

Those who have studied multiple languages know that after learning one language, the second and third come much faster and easier. After learning how to fly one kind of plane, pilots are quickly on their way to flying another. Musicians who have learned one instrument can learn a second or third with much greater facility than those who are just starting their first. Likewise, students who study Latin and/or Greek will find they are capable of learning additional languages (especially Romance languages) with much less effort.

INTEGRATION OF LEARNING

I have mentioned that classical educators do not see subjects as self-contained and isolated. Knowledge is more like a web than a chest of drawers; there are no subjects that are unrelated to others. Literature, history, and religious studies, for example, are quite intertwined. Anything from the past (in any subject) can be history; anything committed to creative or excellent writing can be literature; and anything considered in relation to God or religious teaching can be theology or religion. Until the nineteenth century, educators understood and taught knowledge as a web rather than as separate departments. Therefore, while teaching classes in "history" or "literature," classical educators keep the boundaries light and fluid and emphasize the interrelationship of all knowledge.

Note that history and literature are not liberal arts. Nor is philosophy a liberal art. This may be counterintuitive for some. History is an inquiry into the past; literature is a catchall term for books, books of many kinds, including poetry, novels, biography, autobiography, and other forms of fiction and nonfiction. Together, history, literature, philosophy, theology, and even books on natural science are regarded as "great books" that are worth studying because they help us become wise. To enjoy the treasury of these

22. Inflected languages are those in which the endings of nouns and verbs change depending on how they are used in a sentence.

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great books, we should first have training in the liberal arts that open them up to us. Put another way, the liberal arts provide students with the skills that are required to wisely and capably study literature, reason well, investigate and learn from history, and study the philosophical disciplines of ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics.

The teaching of Latin is an apt example of how classical educators integrate knowledge. Latin really is not a simple, self-contained subject. Latin is found virtually everywhere. Since it is found in all English writing, many classical teachers are constantly showing students those Latin root words, thus expanding their understanding and vocabulary of English. Latin is found in science. I recall the day my daughter came home with a science worksheet describing carnivorous, herbivorous, and omnivorous animals and delightfully showed me that one word was from *caro*, *carnis* ("flesh, meat"); one from *herba*, *herbae* ("grass, plant"); and the last from *omnis*, *omne* ("all"). Before her teacher told her, she knew what kind of animals were territorial, arboreal, and aquatic (of the land, trees, and water). Latin is found in literature. Much of the best literature up to about 1950 (and some afterwards) frequently contains Latin allusions or quotations. It is certainly tied up with the study of history, since the Roman Empire dominated Europe for at least a thousand years. Latin inscriptions abound not only in Rome but also in Washington, DC, and in American historical documents. Latin is in logic. All the fallacies of informal logic have Latin names, such as *argumentum ad hominem* (argument to the man—abusing the person rather than addressing his argument) and *argumentum ad baculum* (argument to the stick—appealing to force to persuade someone to adopt your argument). As in logic, Latin is also in rhetoric. All of the figures of speech have Latin (or Greek) names, such as *alliteration* and *assonance*; the five basic rules (canons) of rhetoric and the subcategories of rhetoric all have Latin names. Perhaps you can imagine the integration opportunities for other subjects such as history, literature, religious studies, and science. They are legion.



JOINING THE GREAT CONVERSATION VIA THE GREAT BOOKS

We have mentioned that the liberal arts open the great books to us. Classical educators have always emphasized the importance of mastering

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the masters. They have also oriented students to seek after the true, good, and beautiful in the great books. These transcendental realities[23] have animated classical education since the time of Plato. Commenting on the three transcendentals, Peter Kreeft says that with our imaginations, we discern and appreciate beauty; with our reason, truth; and with our consciences, goodness.[24] In the great books, students can participate in a centuries-long "great conversation" about the true, good, and beautiful.[25]

Believing that there are real standards of truth, goodness, and beauty, classical educators dared to pronounce some books good and some poor; over time, they even went so far as to name some books the very best. Books that have been declared as great books by a consensus of informed critics over long periods of time we dare to call *classics*.[26] These books can also be judged by their influence—they are great books because they contain great ideas that have given birth to a great and ongoing conversa-

23. Truth, goodness, and beauty are called "transcendental" or "the transcendentals" because they are regarded as realities that exist beyond our earthly experience even though encountered in our earthly lives. Plato (born ca. 428 BC) believed that truth, goodness, and beauty existed in a heavenly reality as "forms" with which all humans were innately familiar.
24. Peter Kreeft, "Lewis's Philosophy of Truth, Goodness and Beauty," in *C. S. Lewis as Philosopher: Truth, Goodness, and Beauty*," ed. David Baggett, Gary R. Habermas, and Jerry L. Walls (Houston: High Bridge Books, 2024), Kindle.
25. This phrase was made widely known in 1952 as the title of the introductory volume of the Great Books of the Western World series, edited by Robert Hutchins and Mortimer Adler: *The Great Conversation: The Substance of a Liberal Education.*
26. What makes a classic? The word *classic* is flexible and ambiguous. Our word *classic* is related to the Latin noun *classis* and the Latin adjective *classicus*. *Classis* could refer to a fleet of ships that were arranged in a particular sequence and order for optimal effectiveness in battle. The Latin adjective *classicus* refers to an arranged order, particularly ordered groups of people or *classes* of people. In English, it preserves this meaning, as in a *class* of first graders. It also has a connotation that means of the highest order—something *classy* is very good or "*first class*." The Latin word *classicus* also referred to the highest class of Roman citizens. The word *classic* preserves this meaning of being the very best. Thus, scholars such as Mortimer Adler refer to classics as books of enduring value. Books that are called "great books" are usually synonymous with "classics." However, books that are classics are enduring works, meaning they are older works, proven by positive assessment over time. It is possible for a new book to be a great book after wide critical acclaim and influence. It will take time, however, for new great books to become classics, if indeed they pass the test. Charles Van Doren is attributed as referring to great books as "the books that never have to be written again."

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tion about what is beautiful, good, and true, and 99 other great ideas if we take Mortimer Adler at his word (he posits 102 great ideas).[27]

In classical schools, we seek to read the great books, the classics. We believe ardently that these books are human books, containing great human ideas that are universal in their application across boundaries of language, race, culture, and ethnicity. We know that there is some great contemporary literature being published, and we do read a sampling of the best we can find and judge in our own culture. We prioritize, however, those books that have proven themselves by their beauty, profundity, and enduring influence. Reading the classics also has the advantage of challenging our modern perspective, as C. S. Lewis aptly points out:

> Every age has its own outlook. It is specially good at seeing certain truths and specially liable to make certain mistakes. We all, therefore, need the books that will correct the characteristic mistakes of our period. And that means the old books.[28]

Starting in the grammar school grades, we choose children's literary classics from various times and genres. Examples include Aesop's Fables, fairy tales, and titles such as *The Courage of Sarah Noble*; *Peter Rabbit*; *The Boxcar Children*; *Little Women*; *The Door in the Wall*; *The Wind in the Willows*; *Johnny Tremain*; *King Arthur; Robin Hood*; *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*; *The Hobbit*; *Where the Red Fern Grows; Treasure Island*; *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*; and *The Bronze Bow*, to name just a few. As students rise into the dialectic school, they begin to read books suitable to their development and burgeoning reasoning ability.[29]

27. In two volumes that preface the Great Books of the Western World series, Mortimer Adler and William Gorman dedicate 10-page articles to each of the 102 "great ideas" that they find contained and discussed in the classic books of Western civilization. The two volumes are entitled *The Great Ideas: A Syntopicon* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952; 31st printing 1989).
28. C. S. Lewis, "On the Reading of Old Books," in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970), 202.
29. For more literary classic recommendations, see *The Classical Reader: A Comprehensive Reading Guide for K–12 Students*, available at http://capress.link/ice04. You can search the recommendations in the print book with filters at http://www.classicalreader.com.

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MORE ON THE CANON: READING THE BEST THAT HAS BEEN THOUGHT AND SAID

In 2010, Google estimated that there are about one hundred thirty million unique books in the world.[30] WordsRated, a noncommercial research data and analytics group, estimates that about five hundred thousand to one million new books are published each year through traditional publishers.[31] With so many books available, how do we choose what we or our students should read?

The short answer is that we filter this list according to criteria that greatly reduce the total number of books. We do this in other areas of life as well, such as when considering what car to buy, where to go out to eat when on vacation in a new town, or what movie to watch. We seek guidance from other list makers. We might consult Yelp for a restaurant recommendation or we might go to a movie review site such as Rotten Tomatoes to find a certain genre of film or a film with a particular rating. We do the same for books, utilizing reviews from sites such as Goodreads and Amazon. The aggregated reviews and ratings of thousands of readers on such sites can be instructive.

Similarly, a list of great books has been curated, not by a website, but instead by the best critics of the last two thousand years. This list of the great books of humanity has grown organically over centuries as books were read and reread, published and republished because of how greatly esteemed and influential they were. These books are often one hundred years old or older and include works such as Plato's *Dialogues*, Aristotle's *Ethics*, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, and the plays of Shakespeare. While various lists of the great books have grown over time and may vary, they largely overlap. From time to time, authoritative lists have been created, such as the list of books published in the Harvard Classics (1909) and the Great Books of Western Civilization (1952).

30. Leonid Taycher, "Books of the World, Stand Up and Be Counted! All 129,864,880 of You." Blogspot.com, accessed July 17, 2023, http://capress.link/ice11.
31. Dean Talbot, "Number of Books Published per Year," WordsRated, February 2, 2022, accessed August 21, 2024, http://capress.link/ice12.

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The classical education movement has deemed the great books of such import that there are colleges that have great books programs (e.g., The Templeton Honors College at Eastern University and Baylor's Great Texts program), and there are even some colleges that are great books colleges (e.g., St. John's College and Thomas Aquinas College). Many classical schools and homeschools feature a great books curriculum, choosing to have students read and study a healthy portion of great books even if they are also studying some smaller selection of contemporary books.

Reading through a curated list of the great books is one important way that culture—and the best of culture—is transmitted from one generation to the next. G. K. Chesterton called education "the soul of a society as it is passed from one generation to another."[32] In the classical tradition, the soul of society is the treasury of wisdom that humans have gathered over the centuries, kept alive for us chiefly in a library of great books. In *Culture and Anarchy*, Matthew Arnold referred to this treasury as "the best that has been thought and said."[33]

Often, such lists of great books are called the canon of great books. The word *canon* comes from the Greek *kanon* and means "rule or measure." To qualify as a great book, a book must measure up to or meet the standard of greatness to be ruled worthy of inclusion in the list. Additionally, a great book should ask universal human questions, address important and ongoing human issues, have a track record of enduring excellence, and be regularly esteemed and praised by critics from generation to generation. In an important sense, great books make their own case for being great, and thoughtful readers merely recognize and ratify the greatness those books contain. These books speak not with an authority that has been assigned to them but rather with an authority they already possess in and of themselves. After all, before the age of the printing press, who would have gone through the bother, time, and expense of hand copying a book unless it was perceived to have authority? The majority of ancient books that have survived have done so because people recognized them as worthy of having, reading, copying, and passing on.

32. Chesterton, *What's Wrong with the World*, 112.
33. Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (1869; Project Gutenberg, 2020), http://capress.link/ice13.

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Occasionally, there will be arguments set forth for placing one book or another onto a list of the great books. Sometimes this will be a book from the past that some people think should be read again. For example, Tolkien was instrumental in convincing many that *Beowulf* should be considered a great book. Sometimes people will argue that a relatively recent book should be added to the great books list, such as those who love Tolkien's *The Fellowship of the Ring* and think it qualifies as a great book. In my view, there is usually no reason to fret when people make such suggestions: the reading of the proposed books will either attract enough attention and praise to warrant their ongoing inclusion or not.

As I noted earlier, in classical schools and homeschools, it is not only the great books that are read, even if they comprise the majority of a student's reading. Students also read a number of merely good books that are too recently published to have earned the status of a great book (such as *The Fellowship of the Ring*). C. S. Lewis suggested that "it is a good rule, after reading a new book, never to allow yourself a new one till you have read an old one in between. If that is too much for you, you should at least read one old one to every three new ones."[34] Classical students would do well to read three or four old great books for every contemporary good book they read.

The selection a school or homeschool makes of both the great books and the good books will take into account various circumstances, such as the region in which the school or homeschool is located, the primary language spoken, and the ethnic background of those attending. For example, a school in Philadelphia might choose to read *The Autobiography of Ben Franklin*; a homeschool in Massachusetts may choose to read a great deal of Emily Dickinson's poetry as well as *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau; a primarily African American school might choose to read a number of the works of Frederick Douglass and Anna Julia Cooper; or a school in Montana might choose to read *The Journals of Lewis and Clark*.[35]

34. Lewis, "On the Reading of Old Books," 202.
35. To further explore the concept of the canon and importance of the great books in classical education, see my articles on the canon at christopherperrin.substack.com.

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THE TOOLS FOR A LIFE OF LEARNING

We have all heard the proverb "Give a man a fish and he eats a meal; teach him how to fish and he eats for a lifetime." By now, I trust that the reader can guess the application to classical education. We classical educators teach students how to fish, only they are fishing for knowledge and feeding their minds. The pole, the line, and the hook are grammar, logic, and rhetoric, always with them in their tackle box as they seek wisdom and eventually teach others to do the same.

Put another way, classical educators strive to teach students how to learn for themselves. If, for example, we compare logic to a sharp knife, we seek to impart to our students a very sharp knife indeed. There will always be wood enough to carve (other subjects and fields of knowledge); if we can give students a sharp blade, they can carve whatever new wood they find. As explained a bit earlier, this insight inspired Dorothy Sayers to refer to the trivium subjects as "tools of learning," a metaphor that has become prevalent among classical educators.[36] Students who have mastered language—that is, who have mastered grammar and vocabulary, logical reasoning, and persuasive, eloquent speaking and writing—have the requisite tools necessary to study and master any subject they choose. We might hope they will be ready for college and the rest of their life.

We can imagine such a student in college tackling a new subject. He has learned in the early grammar years to approach a subject by breaking it down to its fundamental parts and mastering them through memorization, using chants, songs, and other mnemonic devices. He has learned during the logic years to study the ordered relationship among these parts and to derive the principles that govern them. Finally, he has learned during his rhetoric years to discover how to take his acquired knowledge and communicate it effectively and creatively, applying it to new and varied situations and needs. Now he faces, say, anatomy for the first time. He would know how to start: (1) break it down to the fundamentals (various parts of the

36. Other metaphors are also helpful. See *The Lost Seeds of Learning* by Dr. Phillip Donnelly (available at http://capress.link/ice09) for the way the trivium arts can be considered as "seeds" that bring about fruit, life, and sustenance when planted in the lives of students.

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human anatomy) and master these, using songs, chants, and such; (2) study the relationships of these fundamentals (e.g., the relationship between the skeletal and muscular systems); and (3) write and speak clearly on what has been learned, applying and integrating this knowledge in new settings. Anatomical vocabulary, strange to his peers, would be familiar to him because it is all based in Latin and Greek, which he has studied.

I have used anatomy as an example of how a classical education prepares students for lifelong study. Some think that a classical education may prepare students for further studies in English, language, or history, but not scientific subjects. Historically, this has not been the case. The trivium arts lead to the quadrivium arts; the mastery of language leads to the mastery of science. The great scientists of the past were virtually all educated classically. Mortimer Adler cites the education of the great German scientists of the last century:

> The connection of liberal education with scientific creativity is not mere speculation. It is a matter of historical fact that the great German scientists of the nineteenth century had a solid background in the liberal arts. They all went through a liberal education which embraced Greek, Latin, logic, philosophy, and history, in addition to mathematics, physics, and other sciences. Actually, this has been the educational preparation of European scientists down to the present time. Einstein, Bohr, Fermi, and other great modern scientists were developed not by technical schooling but by liberal education.[37]

Douglas Wilson cites another famous German scientist and chemistry professor, Bauer, who, when asked if he preferred new college students who had been "scientifically" or classically educated, answered that he preferred the latter. Bauer said that after three months in college, the classically educated students surpassed the others who had taken more science courses. He believed that classical students had the best-trained

37. Mortimer Adler, *Great Ideas from the Great Books* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1961), 106.

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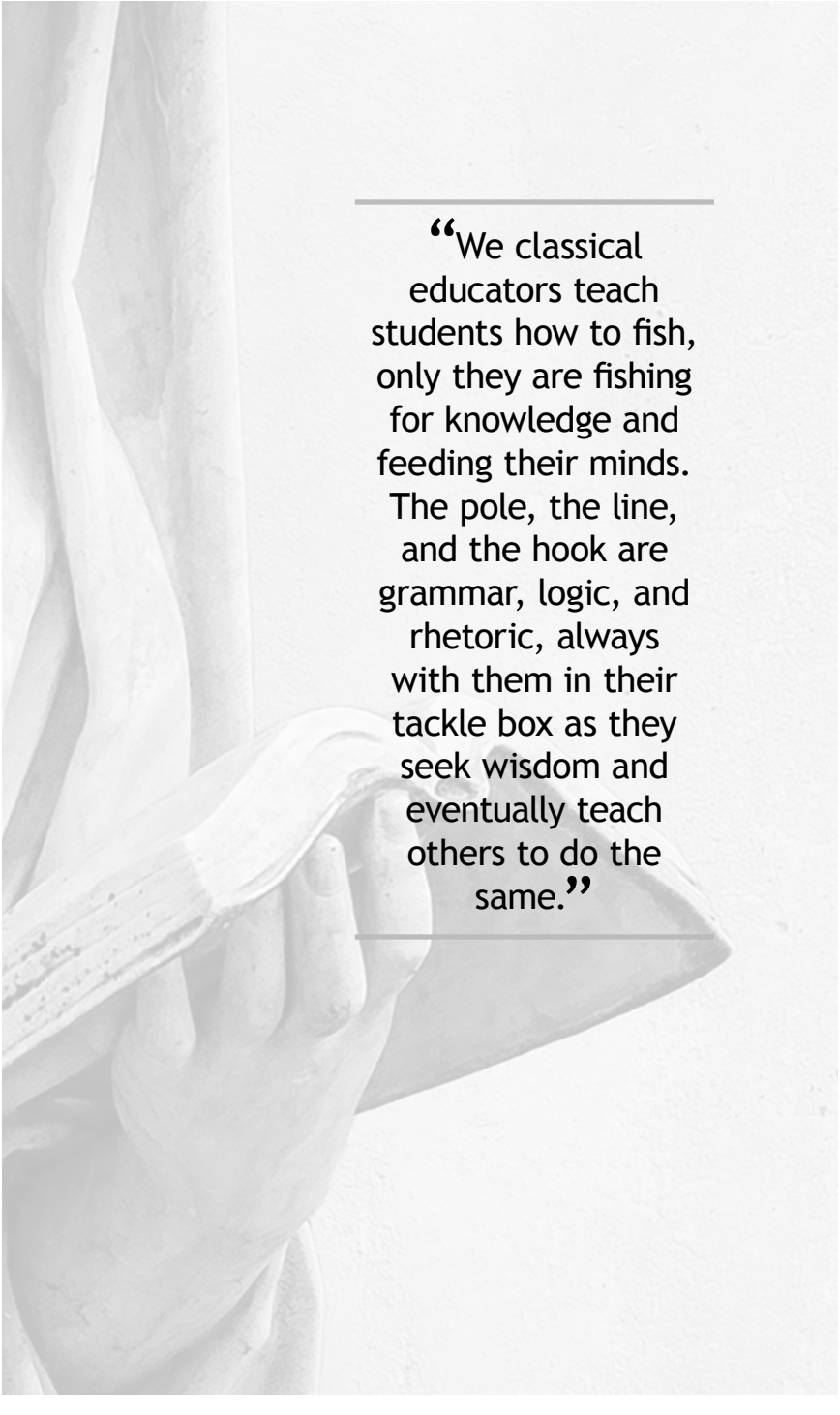

"We classical educators teach students how to fish, only they are fishing for knowledge and feeding their minds. The pole, the line, and the hook are grammar, logic, and rhetoric, always with them in their tackle box as they seek wisdom and eventually teach others to do the same."

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minds, which uniquely prepared them for science study. "Give me a student who has been taught his Latin grammar," he said, "and I will answer for his chemistry."[38]

Whether she chooses to focus on science or literature, history or philosophy, law or medicine, business or art, politics or ministry, the classically educated student will be prepared for study, mastery, and achievement. She should fish well.

Classical education, then, is a lifelong process of applying the "tools of learning"—tools that are the skills entailed in grammar, logic, and rhetoric and that travel with the student through his various stages of learning (called by Sayers the poll-parrot, pert, and poetic stages).

THE ENDS OF EDUCATION: WISDOM AND VIRTUE

G. K. Chesterton pointed out that teaching a child involves disruption and a kind of educational "violence." Students are compelled to lay aside their notions of free play and come to a building where we adults insist they work hard at subjects we thrust upon them. Chesterton writes, "Education is violent because it is creative. It is creative because it is human. It is as reckless as playing on the fiddle, as dogmatic as drawing a picture, as brutal as building a house. In short, it is what all human action is; it is an interference with life and growth."[39] This is to say, classical educators acknowledge that education is hard work for both teacher and pupil. I say this after declaring earlier that students generally delight in a classical education, that we teach them the way they want to be taught. I still hold this as true. But I also believe that hard work and academic rigor do not exclude delight. Classical educators hold to the paradox that joy and labor can live together. Yes, something is being given up (play, TV, video games, texting, etc.), but something wonderful is being gained (another language; new and thrilling books; the marvels of history, science, and math). Neil Postman has helped us see how TV has left us with the notion that all education

38. Wilson cites this conversation between Francis Kelsey and Bauer in his book *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning: An Approach to Distinctively Christian Education* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 89.
39. Chesterton, *What's Wrong with the World*, 166.

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must be entertaining or amusing.[40] This way of thinking is persuasive but erroneous. Children can find even deeper pleasures than the TV and find them through rigorous work toward high prizes.

The Cultivation of Virtue: Diligence and Delight

The cultivation of virtue aims for those deeper pleasures that virtue bestows. *Virtue* means human capacity or excellence; to acquire virtue means to acquire the capacity to do what humans alone can do and to learn to do those things excellently. Our word *virtue* is derived from the Latin *virtus* ("courage," "manliness," and "excellence") which is in turn related to the Latin word *vir*, which means "man."[41] A human being, fully trained and developed, becomes a full or ideal *vir*, an excellent human being. We can hear echoes of this in our words *virtuoso* and *virtuosity*. To be a virtuoso violinist is to be an excellent violinist indeed.

In the classical tradition, there were four "hinge" virtues on which one's moral life turned. These were called the "cardinal" virtues (from the Latin *cardo*, "hinge"). They were justice, temperance, courage, and prudence.[42] The Christian tradition added three theological virtues to this list: faith, hope, and love.

In education, the classical tradition noted that there were several "academic" or "intellectual" virtues that had to be cultivated in students for them to thrive and flourish. These included academic expressions of temperance, courage, and prudence but also virtues such as studiousness, diligence, constancy, and humility.

40. Postman's book *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (New York: Penguin, 1984) is a sustained exposition of the way TV has influenced and shaped the way we now communicate and think. He devotes one chapter to the ways in which TV has shaped education, arguing that "television's principal contribution to educational philosophy is the idea that teaching and entertainment are inseparable." Postman, 147.
41. The Latin word *virtus* is the Latin translation for the Greek word *arête*. Both of these words connote human excellence of any kind. To the Romans, *virtus* could mean "manliness," "strength," "courage," "excellence," "capacity," or "worth."
42. For more information about these virtues and about their depiction in art, see the appendix on page 74.

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Surely you remember working hard for something you prized, perhaps even your beloved. The words *student* and *diligence* retain this same ethos. The Latin word *studere* means "to be eager for" or "zealous." The noun *studium* therefore means "eagerness" and "zeal." *Diligere* means "to love" or "to delight in." One can quickly see the connection: We are diligent about those things we love, whether people, knowledge, or skill. The diligent athlete loves to perform well, to win. The diligent lover stops at nothing to win his lady. The diligent musician practices for hours out of love for music and thirst for virtuosity, and the diligent student is captured by and zealous for knowledge, virtue, skill, and wisdom.[43]

From one important perspective, all of education aims at the cultivation of wisdom and virtue[44]—these are the grand ends we seek. Note that this means that an education is not job training, though there is nothing at all wrong with job training. Education, traditionally, has been the "first thing" and has formed human beings to become wise, virtuous, and eloquent. Job training could indeed be the "second thing." Classical educators seek to put the first things first, lest we disorder and confuse education and risk compromising both the education and job training of our students.

In the classical tradition, then, education was often defined simply as the cultivation of virtue. As students grew in temperance, courage, prudence, constancy, perseverance, humility, and zeal, and as they continued to study the great ideas in the great books, they gradually and slowly became wise human beings, well-formed and capable of serving in a variety of vocations as virtuous parents, neighbors, citizens, and friends.

43. James Sire has highlighted the importance of these "intellectual virtues" in his book *Habits of the Mind: Intellectual Life as a Christian Calling* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000). This book is valuable reading for classical educators.
44. In the classical tradition, wisdom and virtue are often cited together as twin goals of education. Wisdom is the general, lofty, all-encompassing quality of understanding the nature of humanity and the cosmos or the workings and tendencies of humans and the world. Virtue includes all those particular qualities (virtues) of human excellence that capacitate humans to understand and perceive what is true, good, and beautiful and to act accordingly and well.

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Scholé: Fostering Wisdom with Restful Learning

So, classical educators encourage students to live up to their name, *student*. We try to foster zeal, eagerness, and diligence; we try to hold before them the beauty and allure of language, history, and math; we make an appeal to their hearts and their minds and model for them a passion for learning and study. We can do this best in a peaceful environment, with clear rules for student behavior. It may seem odd, but our students are generally happy and enthused (they run and yell on the playground!) but also peaceful and secure. Enthusiasm and peace can coexist.

Over the years of the renewal of classical education in America, educators have also realized how important it is for our schools and homeschool co-ops to be restful. One important part of the tradition emphasizes that for an education to transform a student, that education must be not only active but also contemplative and restful. The Greek word *scholé*, which is the root for our word *school*, means something like undistracted time to study the things that are most worthwhile, usually with good friends in a beautiful place. Ironically, there is not much *scholé* in our schools anymore.

Classical educators have begun to create a more harmonious blend of active, industrious academic work with contemplative, restful consideration of the true, good, and beautiful. Schools and homeschool co-ops have also begun to create more meaningful embodied practices and rhythms of school life that form and cultivate the affections and loves of our students. Several books have been influential in helping classical educators rethink the ways that schools and homeschool co-ops should be organized, scheduled, and operated.[45]

DEMONSTRATIVE RESULTS

Parents want to know how classically educated students actually fare on standardized tests, in college, and in the workplace. These students do

45. *Desiring the Kingdom* by James K. A. Smith, *The Abolition of Man* by C. S. Lewis, and *Beauty for Truth's Sake* by Stratford Caldecott have been especially influential. For a more in-depth exploration of restful learning, see my Scholé Learning course on ClassicalU.com (http://capress.link/ice4941).

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so well that we must be careful how we view them and ourselves; we can be tempted to arrogance. In our belief, they do well not because we or they are so clever and smart. They do well because the proven methods of classical education enable them to. Students around the nation in classical schools typically score in the top 10–15 percent on national tests such as the Stanford Achievement Test and the SAT (originally called the Scholastic Aptitude Test). Established classical schools often graduate a significant proportion of National Merit Scholars (determined by PSAT scores) and students with extremely competitive SAT scores (in the top 5 percent).[46] Classically educated seniors have no trouble getting into good colleges, and many qualify for highly selective colleges and universities; a good number receive merit scholarships or other scholarships. Colleges across the nation have shown an interest in these students and have familiarized themselves with the classical approach and curriculum being recovered in the United States. Classical students are currently enrolled in colleges of all kinds across the United States, from competitive Ivy League schools to public universities, private colleges, Christian colleges, and community colleges.

In 2019, the Association of Classical Christian Schools (ACCS) was able to participate in the Notre Dame Cardus study of K–12 education that surveys the life and behavior of graduates from all the major segments of American schooling. The five segments surveyed were (1) public school graduates (2) private school graduates (3) non-classical Catholic school graduates (4) Protestant school graduates (5) graduates of ACCS schools.

The results of the report are remarkably positive. Of the almost one thousand classical, ACCS graduates there was not recorded a single divorce (a first ever for the Cardus survey). ACCS graduates were the

46. Gene Veith and Andrew Kern have documented these results in their book *Classical Education: Towards the Revival of American Schooling* (Washington, DC: Capital Research Center, 1997), 24. The Association of Classical and Christian Schools (ACCS) publishes a yearly directory that lists the standardized test results of most schools in the association, and those results indicate that ACCS schools on average score in the top 15th percentile. Note that many classical students take the Classic Learning Test, which is designed to reflect a classical curriculum. You can learn about this test at www.cltexam.com.

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most likely to trust the reliability of the Bible *and* the findings of science. ACCS graduates outscored other graduates on standardized tests such as the SAT by a good margin. Perhaps most importantly, ACCS graduates were the most likely to regularly attend church (80 percent) and serve as leaders in their church. At a time when 70–80 percent of Christians stop attending church during or after college (often no longer professing the Christian faith), this last statistic is stunning.[47]

Classical schools and homeschooling co-ops are growing at a robust rate. It is not unusual for new classical schools to grow by twenty-five to thirty students per year until they reach a full K–12 program in eight to ten years with approximately two hundred students. At the time of this book's printing, there are about seven hundred schools in the Association of Classical and Christian Schools (ACCS), with new schools starting at a rate of about twenty-five to thirty per year. There are many other classical Christian schools outside the ACCS, and over two hundred fifty classical charter schools have also emerged and are growing rapidly.[48] Classical homeschools are growing at an even faster rate, and there are likely more students receiving classical education at home than in traditional school settings.[49]



PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

Classical schools work and partner with parents. Since we believe that it is the parent's responsibility (not the state's) to educate their children, it cannot be otherwise. Authority over children is delegated to us from parents who have enlisted us, as classical educators, to help them in their educational task; this is why it is so important for parents to understand the philosophy and approach of classical education before they seal

47. The full results of the Cardus survey can be viewed at http://capress.link/ice05.
48. Several networks of classical charters schools now exist. They include the Great Hearts Academies, the Barney Charter Schools, and the Responsive Ed Schools. These networks are actively planting schools across the nation.
49. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of families homeschooling exploded. For example, the 2020 census indicated that the number of students being homeschooled grew from 3 percent of the population to 11 percent. Among African American families, the number grew from 3 percent to 16 percent. See http://capress.link/ice06.



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that partnership with the school. We see ourselves as *in loco parentis*—"in the place of the parents." This does not mean that parents dictate the curriculum or pedagogy; it does mean that teachers listen carefully to parents' feedback about the child and seek to forge true relationships with parents in order to best understand and educate their children. This means that parents listen carefully to teachers and respect them and their input; it means that parents take their responsibility seriously by reviewing, supporting, and helping with homework, encouraging their child to be disciplined and diligent. It means that parents make academics a priority in their households and support the teachers and staff of the school.

When parents abdicate their responsibility to educate their children, it is inevitable that some other institution will step in to take over. T. S. Eliot warned that as parents become passive, the schools would increasingly replace parental roles and responsibilities:

> Instead of congratulating ourselves on our progress, whenever the school assumes another responsibility hitherto left to parents, we might do better to admit that we have arrived at a stage of civilization at which the family is irresponsible, or incompetent, or helpless; at which parents cannot be expected to train their children properly; at which many parents cannot afford to feed them properly and would not know how, even if they had the means; and that Education must step in and make the best of a bad job.[50]

Parents at classical schools do not assume that education is the school's responsibility. They understand that the school is assisting them to fulfill *their* responsibility. For this reason, parents should ask themselves: Is a classical education what I want for my child and for my family? Are academics a top priority in my home? True partnership between schools and parents can be formed only when philosophies are aligned. Many parents choose to classically educate their children at home; these parents are certainly taking their educational responsibility to heart. However, most parents have themselves not been classically educated. We are, after all,

50. T. S. Eliot, *Christianity and Culture* (Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1939), 181.

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recovering something that has been neglected for at least two generations. So, many parents are learning along with their children. Many are studying Latin along with their third grader; many parents are finally learning English grammar or studying logic. As such, teachers, parents, and children learn together, creating synergy and excitement but also doing a good bit of hard work. Parents in classical schools think this labor is worth the prize, not only for their children but also for themselves. To varying degrees, we are all trying to get the education we did not receive.

On any given night, parents are encouraging children as they do homework. They are checking homework, reading notes from teachers, writing to teachers or setting up appointments with them, and helping their children stay organized and ready for what lies ahead. Beyond this, they are reading to their children; instructing them in a myriad of ways around the house and the dinner table; discussing books, field trips, and the experiences of the day; and counseling and exhorting them regarding peer relationships, schoolwork, homework, chores, and play. They are parenting. The school helps them parent, but it does not become the parent. Parents assist at school or with clubs, help serve lunch, or coach a team. Many parents are teachers with their own children in the school; parents are board members; parents are administrators. In such a school, parenting and educating are not easily distinguished.

CHRISTIAN AND CLASSICAL EDUCATION

The school where I served as headmaster was started to recover classical education, but the most important aspect of the school is its Christian orientation. Classical education was inherited by the Church, with some modifications, and was put into the service of the Church for centuries. We are continuing a tradition, therefore, that is both classical and Christian. The ancient Christians saw that Jesus Christ must have preeminence in the academy as in all of life. In an age when so many Christians have nonchalantly neglected the life of the mind and adopted their agenda and outlook from secular institutions, we are seeking to recover an outlook that honors Christ as Lord of every discipline, subject, and institution. We see both the academic and spiritual recovery as inter-

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twined, and we seek to repent for our neglect of both. We have not loved God with all our hearts or minds or strength.

Many Christians find it challenging to unify the two halves of their head that have been split into the sacred and secular and to begin thinking "Christianly" about all areas of life. But it is being done. Our curriculum does not use one lonely Bible course to make our education Christian; it seeks rather to integrate Christian teaching in every subject, including math. Even simple equations such as 2 + 2 = 4 have a Christian dimension.[51]

Until a hundred years ago, Christians were at the forefront of all cultural institutions, shaping politics, business, philosophy, science, literature, music, and art. The reasons for the decline of Christian influence are complex and varied, but the abdication of Christians in the field of education is one of the major causes of the decline. In 1963, Harry Blamires could write, "There is no longer a Christian mind."[52] I am glad to say that since 1963, there has been a good deal of ground regained, but nothing approaching what was once held.[53] Classical educators are seeking to help recover the Christian mind and prepare extraordinarily equipped leaders

51. Mathematician and theologian Vern Poythress has shown that "2 + 2 = 4" is neither religiously neutral nor undisputed. He writes: "It may surprise the reader to learn that not everyone agrees that '2 + 2 = 4.' If with Parmenides one thinks all is one, if with Vedantic Hinduism he thinks that all plurality is illusion, '2 + 2 = 4' is an illusory statement. On the most ultimate level of being, 1 + 1 = 1. What does this imply? Even the simplest arithmetical truths can be sustained only in a world-view which acknowledges an ultimate metaphysical plurality in the world—whether Trinitarian, polytheistic, or chance-produced plurality." Vern Poythress, "A Biblical View of Mathematics," in *Foundations of Christian Scholarship* (Philadelphia: P & R, 1975), 86. For Poythress, it is the Christian doctrine of the Trinity that preserves mathematical unity and plurality, thus sustaining the real unity and plurality in equations such as "2 + 2 = 4." See also James Nickels, *Mathematics: Is God Silent?*, which explores an explicitly Christian view of mathematics.
52. Harry Blamires, *The Christian Mind: How Should a Christian Think?* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1963), 3.
53. Thirty-three years later, in 1994, Mark Noll could write, "The scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind." Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 3. He quotes Blamires and makes his assessment of a very partial recovery and urges Christians to complete the task.

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who "can take every thought captive for Christ" and shape and lead the cultural institutions of our society.[54]

SHEPHERDING HEARTS

So, you see that we classical educators are committed to the life of the mind. But as classical educators, we know that a student is not a being with a mind only but a being with both a mind and a heart. We can never teach a mind only or a heart only; we are always teaching a person with both. Consequently, we cannot shirk our responsibility to cultivate the character of our students. Ancient educators such as Plato and Quintilian argued that students must grow in virtue. Quintilian went so far as to say that only the good man could be a good orator.[55] Character has always been a chief goal of classical education. Students, therefore, need guidance, correction, training, and rebuke just as they need encouragement, commendation, and praise. Most importantly, they need parents and teachers (and fellow students) as models to imitate. They need academic discipleship. To this end, classical educators cannot simply teach subjects; they must teach students as whole persons with inherent worth. As teachers, they are also shepherds and as teachers they are simply more mature students who model their ongoing learning and love for the true, good, and beautiful.

Christian educators have historically emphasized that education and study is a part of Christian discipleship—an expression of loving God with all our heart, mind, and strength. John Milton put it very well:

> The end of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection. [56]

54. See 2 Corinthians 10:5.
55. See Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, Book 12, http://capress.link/ice07.
56. John Milton, "On Education," in *The Harvard Classics*, vol. 3 (New York: Collier and Sons, 1910), 286.

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Christians should see that all knowledge is, in an ultimate sense, knowledge of God himself and an attempt to reverse the curse and head back to Eden, where we can be closer to God and become more like Him. That is, Christians frankly face the reality of sin in education and see all knowledge as a means of knowing God, and so in learning attain "true virtue." From this perspective, then, education entails ongoing repentance and spiritual warfare. Since the fall of Adam, this has been the Christian task, and so it is no less the task in education. Thus, classical Christian educators cannot simply teach subjects; they must teach students made in the image of God. As teachers, they are also shepherds.[57]

SOME OBJECTIONS

Now, some who hear of classical education, and even some who experience it, will offer objections. To many, it sounds old and stuffy, calling to mind images of crusty schoolmasters rapping resentful students across the knuckles. Our talk of order and peace is sometimes perceived as strict, cold, and constrained. Some, with a nod and a wink, whisper words such as "rote learning" and fancy they have put all of classical pedagogy in its proper place. To these people, classical education is dreary, rigid, repetitious, dry, antiquarian, and culturally out of step.

Because classical schools have raised the academic bar and expect children to accomplish far more than they typically have in the last fifty years, some charge us with harshness and an undue emphasis on academics. Because classical students typically perform in the top 15 percent of the nation on standardized tests, some charge us with elitism and suspect that only gifted students are suited for classical schools, or that these are the only students we welcome. Then comes the related charge of arrogance and pride; for what else could compel us to announce that our students regularly outperform their peers in other schools?

57. Ted Tripp has written a comprehensive treatment of child-rearing entitled *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, in which he argues for leading children to an inward and enduring change by appealing to their hearts and consciences through an application of the Christian gospel. This book has guided many classical educators as they form and implement discipline practices in schools and homeschools.

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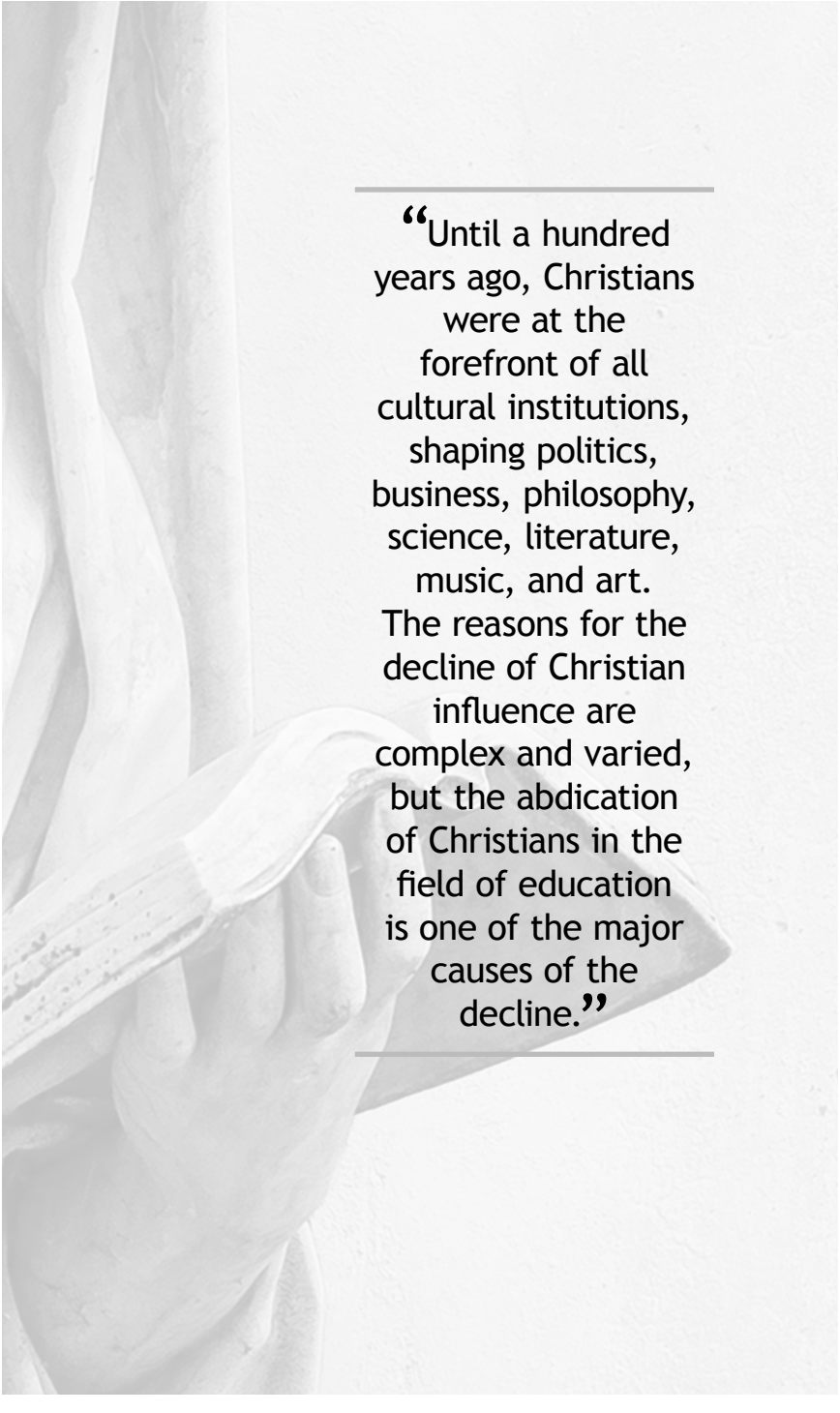

"Until a hundred years ago, Christians were at the forefront of all cultural institutions, shaping politics, business, philosophy, science, literature, music, and art. The reasons for the decline of Christian influence are complex and varied, but the abdication of Christians in the field of education is one of the major causes of the decline."

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There is also an objection to classical education that is a charge of racial elitism. Since about 2015, the political life of our country has become increasingly polarized. As classical education has grown, it has gradually been noticed, scrutinized, and criticized by some who claim that classical studies are White and generally oppressive to minorities. Often the classical emphasis on reading the classics or the great books is singled out for criticism, and sometimes even the liberal arts are viewed as exclusive, Western, and White disciplines that historically have been used to oppress minorities and exclude cultures and races from outside the West.

Then there are objections to the general sequence of the classical curriculum. Latin in third or fourth grade? Logic for three years, starting in seventh grade? To some who have never studied a single foreign language, or who can barely remember a phrase after three years of high school Spanish (most of us), the study of Latin in the third grade seems preposterous. Why study a "dead" language that is not only irrelevant but difficult? And to many, logic is a college-level course that seems dry and obscure.

Finally, classical schools often don't offer as much in the way of athletic programs and extracurricular activities (at least not during their start-up years). This is in part because they are usually young schools that are still developing, with time and money in short supply. Classical schools also prioritize academics above other programs. This chief commitment to academics is criticized by some as lopsided, unbalanced, and stuffy.

I will respond to each of these criticisms. It does not follow that an orderly, peaceful school must also be harsh and cold. It is possible to have respectful, disciplined, and diligent students in a warm, enthusiastic setting. It is possible to be serious about one's work without being too serious about oneself; it is possible to be both industrious and joyful. We grant that such a combination is rare in schools, but we maintain that it is being recovered.

The charge of elitism cannot be established simply on the basis of strong student performance. Classical schools typically enroll students with common ratios of average and gifted students. In my experience,

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classical students score well on standardized tests because the classical curriculum of the liberal arts and the great books really does work, and it enables students to acquire skills and knowledge. In addition, classical students often acquire diligent and disciplined study habits, which can result in superior performance by students of normal intelligence. Whenever a student (or a school or co-op at large) excels academically, there is a temptation to pride. This is a weakness in classical education, and one for which we should repent whenever it appears. I would point out, however, that academic failure (or mediocrity) brings its own temptations—despair and apathy—that require their own repentance.

Classical education is not racially elitist, historically or philosophically. Classical education has always been a human education—an education that seeks to cultivate virtue and humanity—for all humans. It is true, however, that the growth of classical schools has been primarily among those who can afford private school tuition, and this has meant that most school populations do not reflect the cross section of minority families who cannot easily afford to attend such schools. In the last twenty years, several schools in urban minority communities have started and begun to thrive, and a network for creating such schools has emerged—the Spreading Hope Network,[58] founded by Hope Academy in Minneapolis under the leadership of Russ Gregg. Many classical schools that are primarily White and suburban have taken steps to fund scholarships and recruit families who otherwise could not attend such schools. Many African Americans have come into the renewal of classical education and have started schools and homeschools. Professors Angel Adams Parham (University of Virginia) and Anika Prather (Catholic University) are two such leaders, and they have written a book called *The Black Intellectual Tradition* that explains how classical education equipped African Americans in the past and is being renewed today.[59]

The history of the United States does include instances of racism and racial elitism that have touched many elements of our culture, including education. While we can point to examples of this racism such as the

58. You can learn about the Spreading Hope Network at www.spreadinghopenetwork.org.
59. You can purchase *The Black Intellectual Tradition* at http://capress.link/ice10.

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segregated schools established in the South, we ought not to generalize from these examples and conclude that classical education is innately the province of any one race, ethnicity, or culture. Writers such as Angel Parham and Anika Prather make it clear that classical education is multiracial precisely because it is profoundly human education. In fact, they show how many of the great African American leaders in our history (e.g., Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Martin Luther King Jr.) became great in large part because of the classical education they pursued.

The objections to classical curricula are usually the result of our own ignorance—a form of xenophobia. We may criticize what is foreign to us. This is compounded since classical curricula appear to be made of "old things" (such as Latin) in an age that loves the endlessly new. Studying Latin seems like going backward to this mindset. It is clear, though, that something is not bad for being old any more than it is good for being new. It must be judged on other merits besides those of age, and the merits of Latin and logic study are numerous.

The objection that the curriculum is exclusive and Western contains a grain of truth but misses much. Yes, the curriculum filters the great mass of books available and selects books that have endured through time and critical appraisal and are regarded as enduring works of human excellence. In this sense, a classical curriculum does exclude some books. But the curriculum of the liberal arts, natural sciences, and the great books is universally human. The word *Western* may seem to exclude *Eastern*, but it really designates something that was multinational, multilingual, and involved three continents (Europe, Africa, Asia Minor). With the exception of parts of China and India, it involved all the sources of writing available to humans through history. The reach of classical education includes great human ideas and texts wherever they are found, and so even Eastern books qualify for study and benefit.

It is true that newly established classical schools do not have much to offer in the way of athletic and extracurricular programs. This, however, is true of most new schools of any stripe. It is also true that classical schools emphasize academics, but that is precisely because good academics are

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what American schools often lack. This is not to say that classical schools don't value athletics and other activities—they do. However, these come second to a strong academic program, as a new school's limited resources must go to academics first. In the early stages, schools often look for volunteer help to establish athletic and extracurricular programs.



HEADING HOME

If we dare call the classical education movement a movement, then it must be going somewhere. As I have said, we classical educators think we are moving backward and forward at the same time. We are going home in order to move out. And if we take the further audacious step and call what we are doing a revolution, then we had better be *re*-volving, that is, turning back to our friends from the past who were educated so much better than we were educated. We should be resolved to work hard; and we should expect opposition, for not everyone will understand and appreciate this endeavor. Popular culture is set against us; our own shabby educations are set against us. And we should be patient; this task will take time. What was lost in a generation or two will likely take as long to fully recover.

We swim upstream, resolved not to be carried along with the current.[60] We have tasted something old that is becoming new again; we have an inkling of a profoundly better mind and heart, a continuing conversation with great minds and with each other. Books, rather than the TV, have enchanted us once again:

> From the heart of this dark, evacuated campus
> I can hear the library humming in the night,
> A choir of authors murmuring inside their books
> Along the unlit, alphabetical shelves,
> Giovanni Pontano next to Pope, Dumas next to
> his son,
> Each one stitched into his own private coat,
> Together forming a low, gigantic chord of language. . . .

60. In *The Everlasting Man*, Chesterton notes, "A dead thing can go with the stream, but only a living thing can go against it" (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1926), 296.

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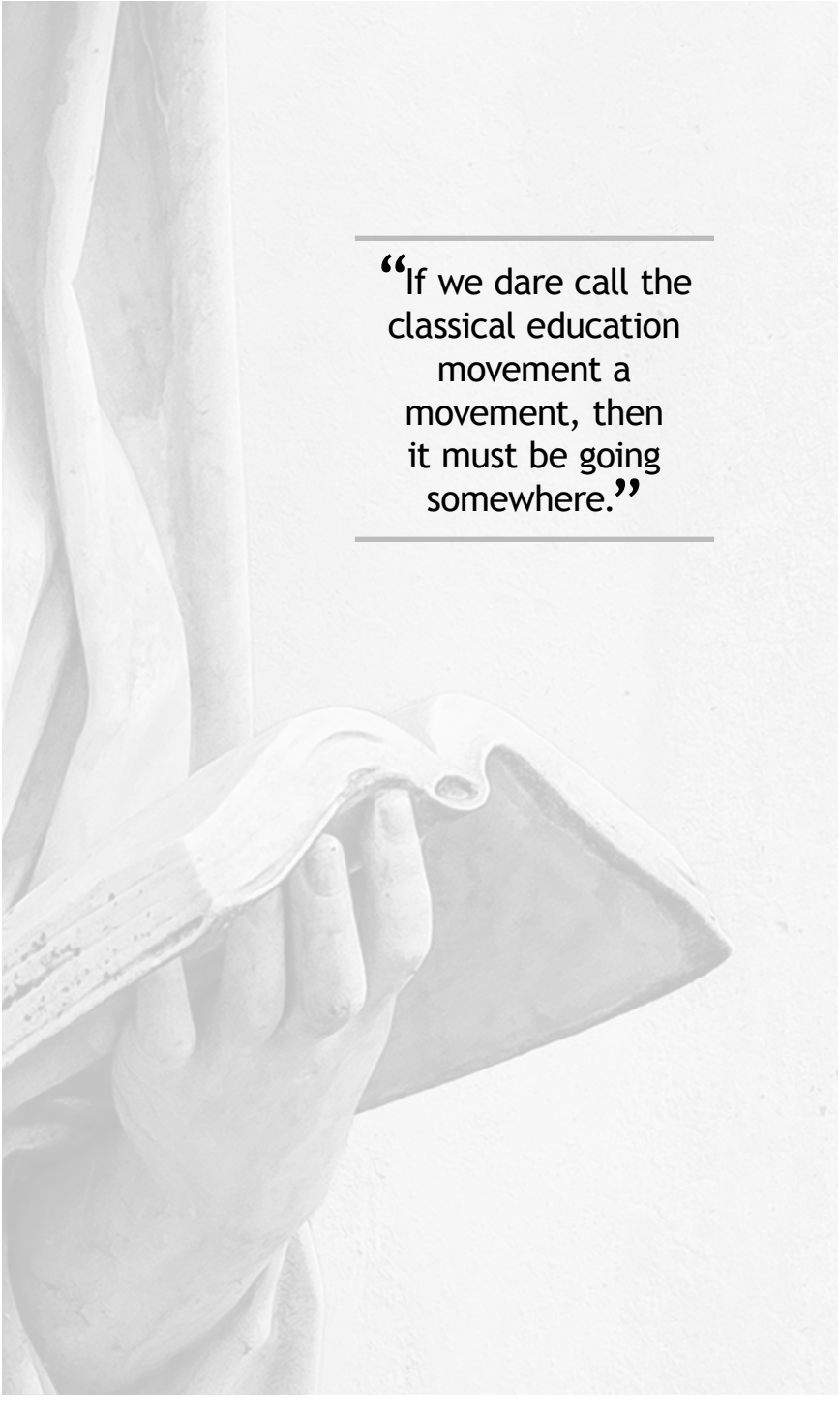

"If we dare call the classical education movement a movement, then it must be going somewhere."

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I hear the voice of my mother reading to me
From a chair facing the bed, books about horses
and dogs,
And inside her voice lie other distant sounds,
The horrors of a stable ablaze in the night,
A bark that is moving toward the brink of speech.[61]

Libraries fascinate and allure us. We hear these murmuring authors and grow irritated at being outside of the conversation; we force our way in, pulling Dumas and his son off the shelf, the books buzzing in our briefcase all the way home. We spend more money than we ought at bookstores and search for used books on the internet. Some of us, such as Billy Collins (the poet of "Books," quoted here), remember our mothers reading to us; most of us now read books we should have been given to read long ago. We read to our children.

Looking to the past, we set our gaze to the future as well. Classical educators are hopeful and forward-looking; we think that the excellencies of the past are the best preparation for what lies ahead. We all concur that while times change, human nature does not, making books and the voice of our mothers reading to us some of the deepest things we know and the most profound gifts we can pass on. Classical education turns out to be, at its root, the love of our children to whom we give the best we have received.

I hope some of your questions have been answered; no doubt, many more have been raised. But I also hope there has been something like a ring of truth sounding through these pages, or perhaps a sense of corresponding parts fitting together, of a puzzle being assembled. Of course, there is more to learn; to this end, I have included a recommended reading list that can guide your queries. If your eyes have not seen what we say exists, visit a classical school, co-op, or homeschool and arrange to see the evidence—the children who embody the past and the future. We are confident they will spark additional interest and questions.

61. Billy Collins, "Books," in *Sailing Around the Room* (New York: Random House, 2001), 12.

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Continuing Your Journey

Most of us did not receive a classical education, and so we have started our journey as adults rather than children. The good news is that anytime is a good time to start this journey. It is also a great benefit to travel with our children, giving them a classical education even as we learn alongside them.

What follows is a "map" or pathway for how you might commence and conduct your journey. Use it as template; you should feel free to modify your own map based on your own background, education, interests, and other circumstances.



PATHWAY FOR PARENTS

1. Using the ClassicalU Course Finder (https://classicalu.com/course-finder), explore customized training goals and learning pathways in our library of 1,000+ training videos across 100+ courses led by veteran classical teachers, professors, and leaders. Generate targeted professional development objectives in six steps by entering your own goals or using your personal profile and your school's mission, vision, and profile documents. Receive recommended lesson sequences that fit your schedule, priorities, and broader professional development plan.

   I highly encourage you to subscribe to ClassicalU. You can sign up for a monthly subscription and take a few courses as your schedule permits or purchase as a school with team account features that will serve your entire faculty. ClassicalU is a respected leader in professional development for classical educators with courses being used for graduate course credits by the Templeton Honors College at Eastern University and other institutions of higher education.

2. **Find a few like-minded friends and grow with them.** Finding even one other person in your community (or online if need be) will be a great encouragement to you as you study and learn. I recommend that you meet monthly to discuss a book you are reading or a course

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you are taking on ClassicalU. If possible, find someone who has been studying the classical tradition of education for five years or more and ask him or her to mentor you.

3. **Read books *about* the tradition of classical education and *in* the tradition.** I recommend that you split this reading roughly 50–50. For every "new" book about classical education (or relevant to it) read an "old" book that is in the tradition. Everyone should read the great books about education, such as *The Republic* (Plato), *The Politics* (Aristotle), *The Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle), *The Idea of a University* (John Henry Newman), and *The Abolition of Man* (C. S. Lewis). And everyone interested in classical education should eventually also read (with help and discussion with friends) the great epics, and ideally in this order: *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, *The Aeneid*, *The Divine Comedy*, *Paradise Lost*.

   Over and over again, I have recommended that parents and teachers get *The Great Tradition: Classic Readings on What It Means to Be an Educated Human Being*, edited by Richard M. Gamble. It is a collection of the great writers (from Plato to C. S. Lewis) on what education is and should be. This is the first book *about* classical education that you should purchase. It pays a double reward because you will be reading classical authors *in* the tradition who write *about* the tradition.

   Of course, there are some great contemporary books that describe and explain the classical tradition of education. I recommend three in particular: *The Liberal Arts Tradition: A Philosophy of Christian Classical Education* by Kevin Clark and Ravi Jain; *Common Arts Education: Renewing the Classical Tradition of Training the Hands, Head, and Heart* by Christopher Hall; and *The Black Intellectual Tradition: Reading Freedom in Classical Literature* by Dr. Angel Parham and Dr. Anika Prather. All these books are available at www.classicalacademicpress.com. See the Recommended Reading List on page 70 for more book recommendations and also visit the "Book Finder" on ClassicalU.com (www.classicalu.com/book-finder).

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Another great source for book recommendations is *The Classical Reader: A Comprehensive Reading Guide for K-12 Students*; you can view the books recommended in *The Classical Reader* at http://www.classicalreader.com/.

4. **Read an hour each day.** For parents with young children, this can be challenging. However, our souls must be fed, and there is simply no way to adequately grow if we don't set aside time to be alone to read, study, and contemplate. In fact, this is central to the entire classical tradition of education. If you don't plan on regular reading and reflection, then classical education is not a match for you. Your children will respond most powerfully to what you model and live out before them. Certainly, you can read good books with and to your children, and this may make up the bulk of your reading during the years your children are younger. But you must also read your "own" books too.

   If possible, join a book club (or start one) that meets at least monthly and discuss what you are reading. This will help keep you accountable to read, and you will gain greater insight into the book because you discuss it with like-minded friends. When possible, try to read with others who have greater reading experience and insight than you so you can benefit from their wisdom. If possible, find a mentor or two who have been engaged in classical education for five or more years to lead and encourage you.

5. **Don't just read, *do* classical education.** Reading is critical, but it is also important to try to embody the ideas of a classical education in many other ways. The liberal arts make us makers—beings who create out of language (the verbal arts of grammar, logic, and rhetoric) and out of number (the quantitative arts of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music). So, we should be "making" and enjoying what others have made. This means, for example, music. Learn, make, and enjoy music with your family. Attend concerts that feature beautiful music. Write and enjoy poems and short stories. Enjoy museums. Spend generous amounts of time in nature observing, collecting, naming, measuring, and pondering. Embrace

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and enjoy the common arts (the arts common to all humans and human flourishing such as cooking, gardening, leather making, and animal raising and training) and read Christopher Hall's *Common Arts Education* to help you to do so.

6. **Visit your classical school or homeschooling community.** If you are a parent at a classical school, get involved and visit and support your school regularly. Volunteer to use your gifts and training. If you are part of a homeschool community, do the same. If you are not part of a classical school or homeschool community, visit one or two and consider sending your children to a classical school or homeschooling community. If you are a homeschooling parent, consider starting or joining a classical homeschooling community or enrolling your children in some online courses at Scholé Academy (www.scholeacademy.com). Learn how to start a Scholé Community (a classical homeschooling community) by visiting www.scholecommunities.com.

7. **Craft a five-year plan.** Five years will go by in a snap. The way to grow into the classical tradition of education is incrementally and slowly. Craft a reading plan and select the five books you plan to read each year. Modify the plan as you proceed and learn more about classical education. Craft a sequence of three ClassicalU courses to take online your first two years and then plan to keep going.

8. **Journal, blog, or keep a commonplace book.** Writing down your thoughts and insights as you study, read, and learn enhances and fixes learning. A commonplace notebook is not a mere journal; it is a collection of quotations that you have entered from your own reading. By regularly making entries and meditating upon them, what you read begins to read you.

9. **Attend a conference or retreat.** If your schedule permits, plan on attending one of the annual or regional conferences sponsored by the CiRCE Institute, Society for Classical Learning, the Association of Classical Christian Schools, the Institute for Classical Education, the

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Institute for Catholic Liberal Education, or the Alcuin Fellowship. The Alcuin Fellowship sponsors regional retreats in the mid-Atlantic region (usually in Virginia), Texas, California, and in the Midwestern region (in Michigan, Missouri, or Kansas). Here are the websites for each:

- https://circeinstitute.org/
- https://societyforclassicallearning.org/
- https://classicalchristian.org/
- https://classicaleducation.institute/
- https://catholicliberaleducation.org/
- https://www.alcuinfellowship.com/

10. **Mentor others.** After a few years of growing in this tradition, consider helping others who are new to it. This will be a double blessing: Newcomers will be helped greatly by your experience and guidance, and you will deepen your own understanding by giving what you have received. When you share or teach what you are learning or have learned, it becomes more a part of you, is better understood, and fattens your soul.

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Continuing Journey Checklist

- ☐ Take the Pathway Finder Assessment on ClassicalU.com
- ☐ Subscribe to ClassicalU at ClassicalU.com
- ☐ Find Like-Minded Friends
- ☐ Find a Mentor
- ☐ Read Books in the Tradition
- ☐ Read Books about the Tradition
- ☐ Visit the Book Finder Page on ClassicalU.com
- ☐ Visit www.ClassicalReader.com
- ☐ Go to a Play, Concert, and Museum
- ☐ Play Music, Write a Poem or Short Story, and Make Art
- ☐ Go Outside to Observe, Name, and Collect
- ☐ Enjoy the Common Arts
- ☐ Visit and Participate in Your School or Homeschooling Community
- ☐ Start or Join a Scholé Community
- ☐ Explore Scholé Academy
- ☐ Craft Your Five-Year Reading Plan
- ☐ Keep a Reading Journal
- ☐ Keep a Commonplace Book
- ☐ Start a Blog
- ☐ Share What You Learn with Others
- ☐ Attend a Conference or Retreat
- ☐ Mentor Someone Else

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Outline of the Online Course: Introduction to Classical Education

On ClassicalU.com, you can find a thirteen-lecture course that complements and extends the content of this book. If you have enjoyed this book, I encourage you to watch the first two video lectures of this course, available for free on ClassicalU.com. Here is an outline of the lectures and content of the course:

Introduction: Introduction to Classical Education

Lesson 1: A Clear Definition of Classical Education

Lesson 2: Clear Words for Classical Education

Lesson 3: To What Shall I Compare Classical Education?

Lesson 4: Various Models of Classical Education

Lesson 5: The Major Elements of Classical Education

Lesson 6: Tracing the History of Classical Education

Lesson 7: Why Classical Education?

Lesson 8: Communal Education (*Paideia*)

Lesson 9: Implementing Classical Education

Lesson 10: The Developing Models of Classical Education

Lesson 11: Deepening Our Understanding of Classical Education

Lesson 12: How to Read Well (Dr. Perrin's Top 55 Books on Classical Ed)

Each lesson or lecture also contains a detailed and downloadable outline of the lecture, discussion questions, and recommended reading. This course can also be taken for credit with ClassicalU, and subscribers can receive a Continuing Education Unit (CEU) credit via the Association of Christian Schools International.

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Recommended Reading

This book is a short introduction to classical education for those new to it. There are many, many books that one could read to become familiar with this long, rich tradition of education. While this list may appear long, please note that it starts with introductory books that I recommend. Please also see the 101 and 102 "top ten" collections near the bottom of the list.

Introductory Books

- *An Introduction to Classical Education: A Guide for Parents* (Christopher A. Perrin)
- *The Lost Tools of Learning* (Dorothy L. Sayers)
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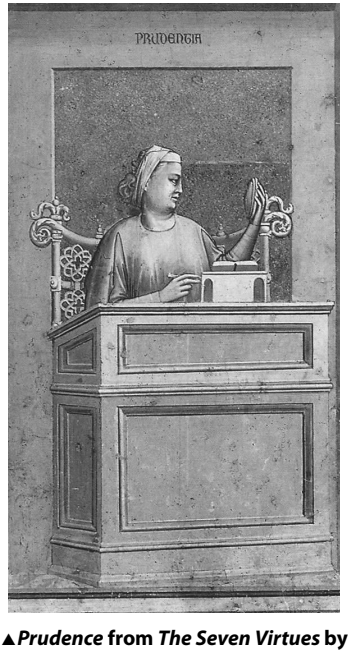
Appendix: Virtue in Art

PRUDENCE

Prudence is seeing circumstances clearly and thinking carefully to make the best possible decision in a given situation. This virtue was often represented as a woman gazing into a mirror. This is because prudence is a kind of practical wisdom that enables people to examine and know themselves, in fact to know what it is like to be human with all our abilities, strengths, and flaws. Sometimes Prudence is pictured with the face of an old man on the back of her head. This symbolizes the wisdom that comes from studying history (looking backwards) and learning from those who have lived before us. Sometimes Prudence is represented holding a serpent, calling to our minds the words of Jesus, "Be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16).



▲***Prudence*** **by Piero del Pollaiolo (1443–1496)**



▲***Prudence*** **from** ***The Seven Virtues*** **by Giotto di Bondone (1266–1337)**

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▲*Allegory of Prudence* **by Girolamo Macchietti (1535–1592)**



▲*Prudence* **by Andrea della Robbia (1435–1525)**

TEMPERANCE



▲*Allegory of Temperance* **(ca. 1580)**

Temperance is self-control and restraint to avoid taking a good thing to the point of it becoming extreme. This virtue is usually depicted as a woman pouring water into a vessel of wine. In the ancient and medieval world, wine was considered too strong to drink without the addition of some water. Therefore, the pouring of water into wine symbolizes the need to properly blend, harmonize, or mix, as well as the need to avoid extremes. Temperance is also often pictured with reins or ropes, symbolizing restraint and moderation. She might even be depicted as hesitating to use a weapon, such as a sword, symbolizing restraint in war.

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▲*Temperance*, detail of a fresco by Raphael (1483–1520)



▲*Temperance* from *The Seven Virtues* by Giotto di Bondone (1266–1337)



▲*Temperanza* by Vittore Carpaccio (1465–1525)

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COURAGE/FORTITUDE

Courage/fortitude is bravery, strength, and endurance to face danger, difficulty, or fear without backing down. This virtue is usually represented as a woman holding an oak branch because oak wood is very strong and hard to break. Often a marble column is also pictured alongside the woman, symbolizing how courage enables us to stand strong against adversity. Sometimes the woman is wearing a helmet as well, indicating that she is prepared for conflict and battle.



▲***Fortitude*, detail of a fresco by Raphael (1483–1520)**



▲ ***Fortitude* from *The Seven Virtues* by Giotto di Bondone (1266–1337)**



▲***Fortitude* (ca. 1520)**

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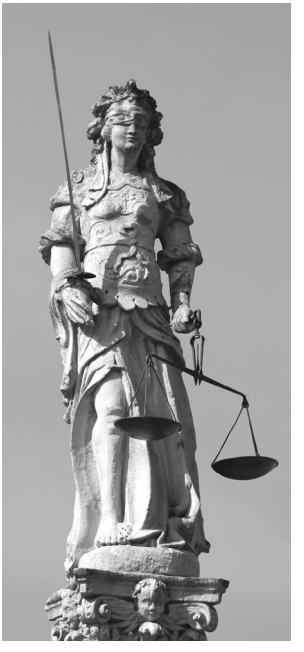
JUSTICE

The virtue of justice is giving each person what he or she deserves or is owed. This virtue is almost always represented holding balancing scales, symbolizing the ability to make good judgments and to give to each person what is deserved—whether reward or punishment. The sword she holds in her other hand represents punitive justice, or a just punishment for wrongdoing. Sometimes she wears a blindfold, suggesting she is not swayed by appearances.



▲**Statue of Justice (1605) in Cudrefin, Switzerland**



▲***Justice* from *The Cardinal Virtues* by Nicolaes de Bruyn (1571–1656)**



▲***Justice* from *The Seven Virtues* by Giotto di Bondone (1266–1337)**

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▲*Justice*, detail of a fresco by Raphael (1483–1520)

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SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Dr. Christopher Perrin

Christopher serves full-time as the publisher of Classical Academic Press and also speaks as an advocate for the recovery of classical education. Christopher speaks in a variety of settings, ranging from training events to keynotes. He is passionate about imparting the virtues of classical education to those contemplating the classical approach and about taking veteran classical educators to the next level. Christopher is an inspiring and informed veteran speaker. He frequently speaks on such topics as:

- *Prudence, the Art of Seeing the Real*
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- *Ten Essential Pedagogies of Classical Education: Principles not Techniques*
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