

## Repairing the Ruins



# Repairing the Ruins

The Classical and Christian  
Challenge to Modern Education



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## **Introduction**

*Marlin Detweiler*

OUTSIDE OF THE GOSPEL ITSELF, NOTHING, AND I DO MEAN nothing, has affected my life more profoundly than the ramifications of discovering Christian classical education. I will not be surprised to learn that you may now or may soon come to share this same experience. Methodologically solid, biblically accountable Christian classical education is very much the order of the day.

To an historian, the recent resurgence of classical methodology in education is no surprise. When Johnny can't read, rite or do his 'rithmetic but feels good about it, someone is bound to notice and go looking for an alternative. Thankfully, God has graciously provided us with a written historical record of a time-proven method in the Trivium.

Dorothy Sayers, a mid-twentieth-century writer and medieval historian, lamented the fact that this three-fold method of teaching the grammar, dialectic and then rhetoric of any discipline had been virtually abandoned. And no wonder. The scholarly work of the Renaissance and Reformation is quite unmatched in our day. Why? Because we simply do not think well. We have not been taught to think. Today, proponents of the Trivium are once again seeing their children blossom in ways they never thought possible by applying this instructional system to the education of their children.

Who is to blame for where education is today? I am. You are. I had four children before it even occurred to me that my responsibility to educate these gifts from God extended beyond choosing the school they would attend. The education of our children has been entrusted to someone or something else for far too long. Deuteronomy 6 makes quite clear what the parents' role is in educating their children. While I am entrusted with the care of my children, nothing I do is more important than bringing them up in the Lord. One can change careers every ten years, change ministry involvements whenever desirable, move from one location to another, but a parent has just one opportunity to raise his children. Wisdom lives in the cliché that no one ever says on his death bed, "I should have spent more time at the office."

But, some will say, "We have many Christian schools, why do we need more?" A close examination of most Christian schools will lead to the conclusion that not only have we not educated the children well from the world's perspective (using an educational benchmark of at least a hundred years ago), we have not excelled at training young men and women to be godly either. A Christian school is not simply a government school with a Bible class added. It was once understood that Theology was the Queen of the Sciences. As spokes extend from the hub of a wheel so all disciplines tie together in God Himself. When we say Christian school we should mean sound biblical teaching in and for all of life. To love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves is what Christ taught as the greatest commandments. Disciplining our minds, our brains, according to God's Word is not as simple as memorizing Bible verses. Applying Scripture to all of life is no simple task. Rigorous study has always preceded Christian maturity. Jonathan Edwards, arguably the greatest pastor and philosopher to have been born in America, was known to study and pray thirteen hours a day, every day. The neatly packaged, get-it-at-the-convenience-store, add-Christ-to-your-life type of Christianity is not biblical Christianity. Christian maturity never results from conversion alone.

Thankfully, today, many parents are waking to the responsibility, blessing and opportunity of raising godly children.

This book is an ordered summary of talks given at national conferences of the Association of Classical and Christian Schools. They are moving. I trust you will be changed by having read them. I hope that you will be challenged to consider starting a Christian classical school or finding one for your children to attend. We are fortunate to have the relatively recent experiences of these men as resources to use in developing and applying the Christian classical educational model in our respective settings. It is quite likely that you will have no more timely and important opportunity in your entire life than to assist in the awesome task of “repairing the ruins.”