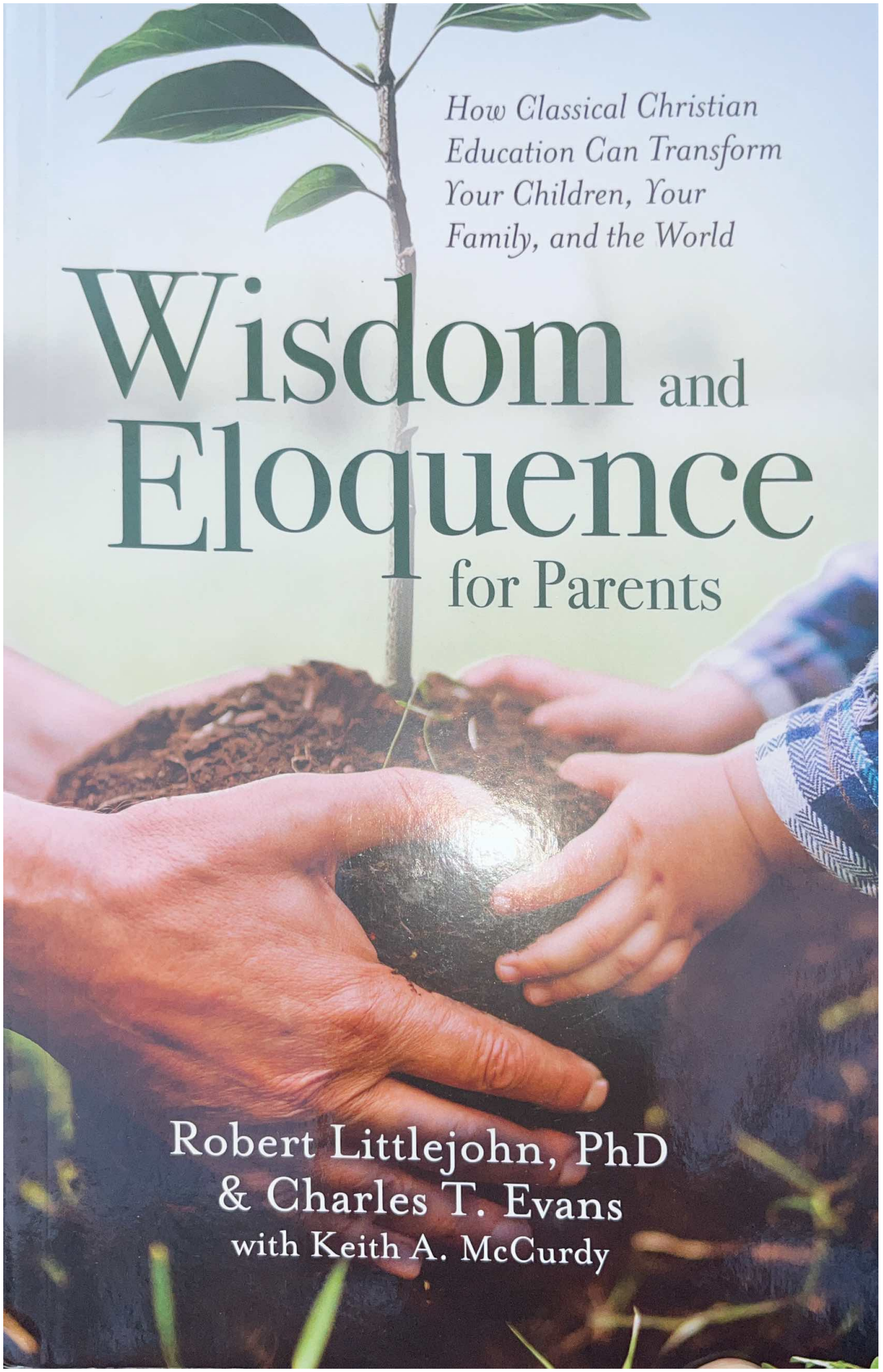




*How Classical Christian
Education Can Transform
Your Children, Your
Family, and the World*

Wisdom and Eloquence for Parents

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Parents and the Classical Christian School

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

I (Robert Littlejohn) remember with both amusement and frustration serving on a science text-selection committee at my son's public elementary school before we discovered classical Christian education. The first revelation was that my being a PhD scientist was of no interest to the school administration. The second revelation was that, even as "just a parent," my input was not desired. The text-selection decision had been made before the committee was assembled. The clear message was that "parent involvement" was a box to be checked, rather than an acknowledgment of any parental responsibility for their children's education.

In stark contrast, classical Christian schools see themselves as partners with parents who, biblically, have the primary responsibility for their children's education. Two passages of Scripture make this responsibility clear. And their references are easy to remember, since they both begin with chapter 6, verse 4. The first is the Hebrew *Shema* from Deuteronomy 6:4-9:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.
You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your might. And
these words that I command you today shall be on
your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your
children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your

house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

The second is Ephesians 6:4: “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the *paideia* (formal instruction) and *nouthesia* (spontaneous teachable moments) of the Lord.”

The first charges parents with diligently teaching their children God’s commands, talking about them when you sit, walk, lie down, and rise up—essentially all the time. And the second charges them to bring their children up with clear goals. If this sounds like homeschooling, that’s certainly an option. But for many Christian parents, partnering with like-hearted educators at a classical Christian school is a more achievable means of fulfilling the biblical mandate to educate.

Parents will find at their classical Christian school a respect for their place as educators of their children. This may not (or may) mean serving on a text-selection committee, but it will mean that the school will not intentionally or knowingly usurp the parents’ role in educating their children, as is common in conventional schools. While the program content will not be as accommodating to individual parent wishes as would be their own homeschool curriculum, care will be taken to leave instruction on “nonessential” doctrines of the Christian faith, for example, to parents. And deference will be made whenever possible to parental authority. The ubiquitous “us vs. them” teacher/parent tension is not what parents can expect. At classical Christian schools, the principle of *in loco parentis*—in the place of parents—means that teachers are authorized *by the parents* to instruct children in all matters that are not reserved to the parents for instruction.