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Edwin Mortimer Standing

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

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Thirty-five years have passed since the first edition of this book appeared. During that interval World-history has unfolded itself with astounding rapidity. We have lived through a second World-war, now being followed up by the Cold war, during which a bewildered humanity carries on from day to day under the imminent threat of an apocalyptic catastrophe.

It is quite possible that historians of the future - looking back to this period through a perspective of centuries - may note that it was an epoch remarkable for two ^{tremendously} ~~tremendously~~ important discoveries - both relating to the release of energies hitherto unknown and unimplemented. One was the discovery ~~of the~~ and release of the titanic physical forces locked up on the atom; the other the beneficial release of hitherto ~~to~~ unsuspected energies, ~~in~~ intellectual and spiritual, in the souls of children.

From the point of view of the ~~History~~ of the Church the most striking event in those years is the Ecumenical Council, with all that it implies in the present and the future. From the point of view of our immediate task - this second and much enlarged ^{edition} of "THE CHILD IN THE CHURCH" - the most significant happening was the death of ~~Madame~~ ^{Madame} Montessori at the age of 82 years, on May 12th 1952. Happily her work and her influence in the sphere of education did not die with her. In fact she left behind her a movement more dynamic, more extended - and extending - than at any previous time in her long career. Official and unofficial training ^{Centres} ~~centres~~ ^{Montessori} for teachers exist in most of the capitals of Europe - also in India and Ceylon; whilst Montessori schools are found, - and new ones keep cropping up - in almost every part of the world.

In the United States , after a long period of quiescence , there has been a remarkable renaissance of Montessori activity. There is a saying that " you cannot keep a good man down , " and this is equally true for a good principle , or group of principles , such as lie behind the Montessori approach to education . The Montessori principles collectively form a dynamic energy which continues to operate quite independently of the genius who discovered them . During the past half century , since Montessori began her work in 1907 , this "leaven " has gone on working in ever widening spheres ; first , geographically , that is to say in more and more countries , and secondly , psychologically , in the application of her principles to more advanced epochs in human development , and ^{to} ~~in~~ an ever increasing variety of subjects , including religion .

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Inside the Catholic Church important changes have been taking place with regard to ~~the~~ methods of teaching religion . The "Penny Catechism " and the "Parrot System" which so often went with it , have been more and more criticised , and more and more felt to be inadequate . Many different experiments have been made , and are still being made , to find a better way , but as yet there seems to be no general certainty as to what is the best substitute . Meanwhile , with the upsurge of a neo-paganism which attacks the Church ever more fiercely and in ever new forms , the need for a vital ~~method~~ of religious training has become ever more urgent .

It is our conviction that the Method discovered by Dr Montessori has laid down the general lines along which this problem can best be solved . And we say this not simply because along ^e amongst the educators of world-wide renown in this

century ,Montessori was a Catholic, but because (as is made abundantly clear in thisbook)there exists, by its very nature, a profound affinity between the Montessori Method and the psychological method used by the Church in her Liturgy. Montessori herself admitted to the present writer on more than one occasion that in the working out of her ~~won~~^{own} educational ideas she learned much from what she called the "pedagogical method " of the Church . Furthermore she has put on record that - as one of the results of her own experiments , particularly in Barcelona - ~~that~~ her ~~won~~^{own} method could only find its fullest expression when applied to the teaching of the Catholic Faith . In fact she was convinced that this new method was , by a peculiar and providential concatenation of circumstances ,placed in her hands for the advancement of the Kingdom of God through its application to the teaching of the truths of the Catholic Faith . All her life , too , she entertained the idea that the formation of a new religious order might be the most appropriate means for the carrying out of her work - a point to which we shall return later .

We have thought it appropriate in this second edition to say something about Montessori as a Catholic .In this connection we should like to express our deep gratitude to Signorina Maccheroni for the valuable first-hand information which she has provided . "Macch" , as her friends call her, is the only surviving disciple of Montessori who was there from the very beginning ; and was one of the first to devote her life , with its many brilliant talents , to the Dottoressa's work .

Since the first edition of this book in 1935a great deal of research has been going on quietly and unobrusively , in a number of Catholic Montessori schools in different countries, on the application of Montessori principles to the teaching of religion .

We are fortunate in being able to include in this volume descriptions and illustrations of some of ~~the~~ this interesting and original work .Amongst those who have contributed in this manner we would like to express our gratitude to the Rev Mother Isabel Eugenie who was for many years an intimate friend of Dr Montessori . It was through her influence that Montessori gave a course of lectures on the teaching of religion at the Assumption College in London ^{in 1936} from which we have drawn copiously in the following pages . We are grateful also to Rev Sister Stephanie O.F.F and her staff for illustrations of children working with materials which they ^{have} devised . No less ^{more in obscurity} are we grateful to the Marchesa Sofia Cavalletti for her valuable outline of the work that goes on in her Montessori School for Religious Teaching , in ~~the~~ via degli Orsini 34 in Rome , and also for beautiful illustrations of that work . Nor can we omit to ~~put on record our thanks to~~ Monsieur and Madame Lanternier the fascinating and original example of the work which they have been carrying on at the Montessori Centre ^{dit original} Rennes , France . ^{dit original}

It is beyond question that the complete application of Montessori's principles to the teaching of religion is something which still belongs to the future . Its fulfilment will require the loving and disciplined labour of many collaborators in a field which still contains many areas of virgin soil . It is the hope of those who have worked to produce this new edition that some of its readers will be amongst those who will devote themselves to this important task .

As it is quite possible that some of our readers may not have had the opportunity ^{of} ^{ing} ^{the} to acquaint themselves with fundamental psychological principles which underlies the Montessori method

we have reprinted, in this edition, a chapter which gives a general survey of those principles in a reasonably compact form .

~~It would be most inappropriate to conclude this Foreword without a special mention of my friend and publisher, Mr Donald Demarest ,~~
The publication of this book has been held up a number of times owing to ill health and other causes, ^{my friend + publisher} but Mr Demarest has shown himself as patient on these occasions, ^{actually} as he has been helpful at other times with his valuable advice and encouragement .