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Unpublished Notes of
lectures and Conversations
with
Dr. Maria Montessori
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THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AS "THE MIRROR OF THE WORLD."

By the late Dr. Maria Montessori.

Edited and arranged by E. Mortimer Standing.(1)

The following essay - if one may call it so - is the outcome of a series of conversations, spread out over some ten days, between Dr. Maria Montessori and the editor in August, 1950, two years before Dr. Montessori's death. Though he took down full and careful notes of these conversations every day as they proceeded, the editor does not vouch for the verbal accuracy of every sentence; but the substance of the ideas put forward are truly Dr. Montessori's own. In fact on the face they bear the stamp of her original mind. In some places the editor has not hesitated - where it helps to bring out a point more clearly - to amplify it by his previous knowledge of Montessori's writings and lectures; here and there he has added a few comments of his own - in parenthesis.

The scene of these colloquies was a beautifully situated guest house (Landhaus Beck) in the mountains near the village of Iglis, above Innsbruck. These conversations began quite unexpectedly in the following way. The editor - who was on vacation - was at that time engaged in teaching at the Gatehouse Montessori School in London. This school was then housed in the only remaining cloister of the monastery

(destroyed by Henry VIII) which was once attached to the ancient church of St. Bartholomew the Great, in Smithfield, London, E.C.1. This church and the adjacent St. Bartholomew's Hospital (popularly known as "Barts") were both founded by a man called Rahere who had been formerly a jester at the court of Henry II. While on a pilgrimage to Rome in _____, Rahere was taken seriously ill, and made a vow to St. Bartholomew that if he recovered he would found both a church and a monastery with a hospital at Smithfield. His health was restored and he fulfilled his vow; and that is how the church of St. Bartholomew and the hospital of the same name came into existence.

The editor happened to relate this story one morning on the terrace at Landhaus Beck to Dr. Montessori when - rather to his surprise - it seemed to set off something like a mine in the Dottoressa's subconscious.

"It is not only true (she remarked) that many hospitals first came into existence in connection with the monasteries, but it is equally true that in many other spheres also, the Catholic Church anticipated, often by many centuries, beneficent activities which were afterwards copied by those outside it. What the Church did during the centuries out of pure charity was often afterwards undertaken by the State as a matter of policy. To take one example. From the very beginning the Church was - as it is still - very solicitous for the well-being of the poor; and now in this century we

have witnessed the coming into existence of the Welfare State. Similar developments have taken place in many other spheres - in the arts, in education, in architecture, even in politics (it was Archbishop Stephen Langton - more than any other - who was instrumental in bringing about the signing of that great charter of political liberty - the Magna Carta. Ed.)

In fact, we can truthfully say that the Catholic Church is a society, brought into existence and guided by the Holy Spirit, which has - right from the beginning - manifested through its individuals and institutions those factors which are necessary for the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth."

On the following days Dr. Montessori carried these ideas still further, developing them at intervals in the manner shown in the subsequent pages.

"Looked at from a purely objective point of view the Catholic Church is the most interesting and wonderful institution on the earth. Supposing an inhabitant from another planet were to come to this, in order to make a study of its inhabitants, he would find one institution - and one only - displaying in its origin, history, structure, activities, aims, continuity and influence, a unique position - something wholly different from anything else that exists on this planet. He would see in fact a social organism, coming down through the centuries possessing in itself - as it were in

miniature - and from the beginning, everything that human society needs for the establishment of a harmonious civilization, in short Le Specchio del Mondo - the mirror of the world to come - of that society which humanity is striving consciously or unconsciously to create.

"Many reforms and ideals which people are trying to bring about to-day have already been in the possession of the Church for nearly a thousand years. In fact the people in this atomic age are still centuries behind the Church, and do not begin to understand many things which she has known and practised all along.

"Do not misunderstand me! In speaking of the Church in this way I am not considering such matters as the Consubstantiality of the Three Persons in the Holy Trinity, or the Problems of Predestination and Grace, etc. - no, I am thinking of the Church simply as a visible, historical, society objectively considered; regarded as you might say, as a "going concern" amongst others - considered as something viewed dispassionately and without prejudice by a complete outsider - as from another world. For this reason - and from this point of view - the Church is an institution which would repay careful study from many different aspects. I myself learned many things from it (from a psychological point of view) that were useful in building up the practice of my method.

"To me the Catholic Church is the greatest of all the miracles that Our Lord worked on earth. None of the other great religions has anything remotely corresponding to it. It differs from the others because it is a living organism, the creation of the Holy Spirit, and it has brought into existence new forms of civilisation. Compare it with Buddhism for instance. It is true that Buddhism has its own philosophy, yet it has not radically changed and uplifted the form of society around it. (It did not drain the swamps, educate the people, free the slaves, and preach the essential equality of all men before God. Ed.)

"The Church possesses a "divina sapienza" - a divine wisdom - because it was not only created by, but is continually guided and directed by the Holy Spirit. Her wisdom is super-personal; and the Church carries out her divine mission in spite of the imperfections - not to mention the downright wickedness - of some of the individuals in it. Thus, this or that bishop, or priest - or even Pope for that matter - may woefully neglect his duty; but nevertheless the Church continues her mission on earth. Often the individuals, who are carrying out this divine plan, are unconscious of the value of their own work.

The Two Annunciations.

"It is interesting to notice that there exists a certain parallel between the coming of Our Lord and the coming of the Church - which is in sort a continuation of His Incarnation.

Both events were announced beforehand; and both were foretold as the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Angel Gabriel announced to the Blessed Virgin that the Holy Spirit would come upon her; and, similarly, Our Lord foretold to His disciples the coming of the Holy Ghost: and it was with the fulfillment of this prophecy - on the first Pentecost - that the Catholic Church was born.

X /
A Comparison with Protestantism.

We can see a great difference, here, between the Protestant and the Catholic points of view. In Protestantism the final authority is a book - the Bible - whereas in Catholicism it is the living voice of the Church, under the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit. In fact Our Lord promised His followers that when the Holy Spirit came, He would teach them many things about His own doctrine which they were as yet unable to understand. In foretelling the day of Pentecost Our Lord told His disciples to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit - not for a book (which was only completed many years later). It was not the pages of a book that fluttered down on their heads in that upper room but living tongues of flame which the Holy Ghost had enkindled in their hearts. It is the Holy Spirit therefore - working through the ages - which guides the church as a living authority enabling her to speak with authority in every epoch as it comes.

The Organisation of the Church.

One of the most remarkable features of the Catholic Church is its organisation. Contrary to what is generally supposed, Christ, in conjunction with the Holy Spirit whom He sent, was the greatest organiser the world has ever known. Many of the problems which confronted the early church had to do with questions of organisation. During the Middle Ages the whole of Europe was - in a sense - a part of that organisation; and the civilisation of the time, in so far as it reflected the unity of that organisation, was a model one. Even Kings and Emperors were subject to the rulings of the Church. So remarkable is the organisation of the Church - which has come down unbroken through the centuries - that those outside it would be better advised - instead of attacking it - to study it dispassionately; and in doing so they would glean many important hints.

How the Church is Governed.

Take for instance, the question of how the Church is governed. If I were head of a state I would send some of my counsellors to make a special study of the method by which the Church is governed. In many countries to-day there exists great confusion and political instability because those who are elected to govern are not really fitted for such a high and difficult task. They have had neither the training nor the kind of experience which would

prepare them for dealing with the sort of problems that they have to cope with. In other departments of public life there is usually a long and special preparation: the lawyer, the doctor, even the ship-builder and carpenter have to go through a long period of apprenticeship. But in this "democratic age" the choice of the governor is often made by the ignorant masses, who are unaware of the qualities which are essential for a true leader. So it often happens that this or that individual is chosen on account of his political views, or of some past achievements which really have nothing to do with the intricate business of guiding a state. It is almost as if a group of persons went out into the street and said "We will take the third person we meet and make him our Prime Minister or President."

Now if you turn your attention to the manner in which, in the Catholic Church, its governors are chosen for their high and responsible offices, you will see how great is the difference. You will see in fact that the method of the Catholic Church is that of an enlightened democracy. You will find that the person chosen to act as the supreme governor has nearly always had a long and varied preparation. Let us consider some of the usual steps in this preparation.

1. One of the most important qualities in a governor is that he should have an intimate knowledge of the people whom he is to govern. So we start with the village cure - the

assistant to the Parish Priest. His work brings him into direct contact with the people as individuals; and he becomes acquainted with their difficulties, their hopes and fears - all their various needs.

2. If the curate does well and conscientiously, and shows promise, he is promoted to the position of ~~Rector~~ Rector to a parish of his own. He is thus brought into contact with a wider area, and bears heavier responsibilities; and has to deal with a great variety of problems which call for prompt decision.

3. If he continues to show himself faithful and efficient, he is again promoted - passing through various stages - until he is made a bishop responsible for a whole diocese.

4. If he continues to acquit himself well and displays even more outstanding qualities, he may be made an Archbishop or even raised to the rank of Cardinal.

5. A still higher office is open to him, by election by the College of Cardinals who, with a sort of educated democracy, choose the new Pope. It is an educated democracy because the cardinals are not "ignorant masses." They themselves have been through the previous stages described above: they know the people, and are well acquainted with the problems of government; and choose accordingly. But it is in a genuine democracy because many of these Cardinals themselves are originally from the masses. (At the time of writing - 1958 - in the College of Cardinals in Rome one is

the son of a farm labourer, another the son of a stone-mason, a third from the family of a boatswain, and the fourth the son of a docker, and of course, as everyone knows, our new Holy Father ^{John XXIII} comes from peasant stock. (Ed.)

The Individual Touch.

You will only find true loyalty to those that rule, by those that are ruled, when the latter feel that they, themselves count as individuals. And this is just what Catholics all over the world feel about their sovereign ruler - the Pope. (There is no need to argue this point: anyone who has heard an Italian crowd shout out "E viva il Papa," or witnessed the ardent devotion of the hundreds of thousands of pilgrims that throng annually to St. Peter's, must realise how profound is this sense of a sort of personal link between the Holy Father and his children. The very teaching of the Church - that every individual soul is of infinite value in the eyes of God - helps to foster this awareness that the Government of the Church exists for the individual benefit of all its members. Ed.)

The Communists have taken a leaf out of the book of the Church in this respect. It is a definite principle in their method of propoganda to make contact with "individuals" through their "cells;" thus making their proselytes feel that they count as individuals, and not merely as one of a crowd.

In this way they are able to arouse in their followers a genuine enthusiasm combined with an intense loyalty - almost comparable to religious zeal.

"A Ministry of Information."

Most modern states of any size have created a Ministry of Information so that they can keep themselves informed of the various social movements that are going on within and without their boundaries. But long before the present age - and for centuries - the Church has possessed the most perfect system of keeping in touch with what is happening in the world, that has ever been derived. Not of course that the Church keeps professional spies, as do many states; but her priests all over the world are so intimately in touch with the people in various countries that they cannot but be aware of the various movements that are going on. All this information is transmitted through various channels to the different "Congregations" in Rome. Let there be a new heresy forming in one country, or a persecution of religious in another, or new methods springing into use in medicine or psychology, or new ways discovered of transmitting information by scientific methods - or any of a hundred and one other new events coming into existence, somehow or other the Vatican gets to know about them as soon - and often sooner than the heads of any other state. (Not only is this so, but, partly for the above

reason and partly as the result of inspired wisdom, the Popes - like Shakespeare's "prophetic soul of the wide world dreaming on things to come" - have as Newman points out - often been so well able to read the signs of the times as to foretell by half a century or more the shape of things to come. Ed.)

Equal Justice for All.

Thirty years ago - when I was living in California - Marie (1) struck up an acquaintance with a student who was to all intents and purposes an anarchist - in theory at any rate, if not in practice. This man was always inveighing against the injustices in society; how in the law courts the rich could "get away with it" in a manner which was impossible for the impecunious. I told him that in a properly organised society everyone - the rich equally with the poor - should be brought before the same tribunal, and judged with equal impartiality. "Yes, yes," replied our anarchist excitedly, "that is just what I think, but that would only happen in Utopia!" "Not at all," I replied, "such a society already exists, one in which every one, from the king downwards, is obliged to go before the same tribunal, and their offences judged with the same impartiality." The anarchist opened his eyes wide with incredulity and exclaimed, "Where is that society?" "It is the Catholic Church," I answered. "Kings and Emperors - even the Pope himself - all have to come before the tribunal of the Confession, where their sins are judged in the light of immutable moral laws. In the

Middle Ages it was not uncommon for the highest personages in the land to do public penance for their sins. (Thus Edward III walked barefoot to Canterbury for causing the murder of St. Thomas a Becket; and the ~~Emperor Charlemagne~~ ^{King Henry IV of Germany}, after divesting himself of his crown and royal robes, ^{knelt in penance} before Pope Gregory ^{the 10th} at Connessa. Ed.) ^{in 1077.} ^{clothed in sackcloth}

Right and Wrong Ideas of Justice.

The world outside the Christian tradition has its own idea of justice, but it is a very limited one. I once knew an old Italian peasant who said to me: "I have lived for seventy years but in all that time I have never, thank God, had anything to do with justice!" By this he meant to say that in all his life he had never been brought into a court of law as a prisoner. This implies a very negative idea of justice - as if it only concerned itself with evil deeds, and had no necessary connection with the good, still less with genuine sanctity.

As a consequence of this point of view the attention of the world (as far as justice is concerned) tends to be focussed on crime and evil. The public are even invited to come and see "how justice is carried out:" the papers are full of detailed and morbid accounts of all sorts of crime; press photographers rush to the scene of a crime to obtain lurid pictures of it and of those who took part in it. The cinemas, too, are constantly portraying criminal actions - which, incidentally, is one of the causes for the increase in juvenile delinquency.

The Church, on the contrary, has a higher and more complete idea of justice. Her tribunals study not only what is evil but also what is good. The long sifting of evidence which is carried out during the process of canonization is a concentration upon what is good. - upon the conspicuously charitable actions - the heroic sanctity - of the Servant of God whose case is being tried. In this way, and in the lives of the saints, the Church focusses the minds of her children on the good rather than the evil, thus tending to raise the level of morality instead of lowering it, as happens when so much attention is given to crime.

There is also another point which is also worth mentioning in this connection. In civil law the criminal remains a criminal after his sentence: in fact in ancient times he was literally branded as one. Even now, a civil servant who is punished by law for any serious offence loses both his position and his pension; and there always tends to be a social stigma on anyone who has served a term in prison. How different it is in the Church! It matters not how grave has been his offence, the criminal, once he has passed through the tribunal of penance, is re-instated to his former dignity as a human being. Many indeed - like Mary Magdalene and Augustine - attain to the glory of sanctity and shine for ever as fixed stars in the Church's calendar. It is only quite recently that the Church's point of view with regard to criminals is being taken up by the State. We find now in

certain countries special remedial prisons in which the aim is to help the offender to regain his dignity and self-respect and re-instate him to his former position in society. Here again we see the State - after many centuries - beginning to adopt the point of view which has been part of the Church's teaching since long before the coming of "The Dark Ages."

The Church as the Patron of the Arts. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

When I was giving a Montessori Course in Kodaikanal, in India, amongst the students there was a Protestant lady missionary from Switzerland. She also attended a course I gave in the teaching of Religion. In one of my conversations with her she spoke critically of what she described as the unnecessary luxury which is found in many Catholic Churches, and disparaged the spending of money on beautiful vestments, golden vessels, mosaic designs, paintings, statues, stained glass windows, marble pillars, and so on - money which in her opinion could, and should have been given to the poor. In my reply I said to her, "but all these things - this luxury as you call it - IS for the poor." "Supposing," I continued, "there was somewhere a great and beautiful palace, and supposing there was to take place in it a splendid and elaborate function, attended by a group of high personages marvellously dressed - with beautiful music played by the best musicians - how people would regard it as a favour to be allowed to attend,

and would be willing to pay liberally for the privilege of so doing. Yet - and quite apart from its religious value — this is exactly what happens in a great Catholic cathedral: only with this difference, that the poor are just as welcome as the rich. In museums you may see wonderful paintings and statues and jewels and vestments (many of them originally the property of the Church) and you may even have to pay to go in. But such rare and beautiful things can be seen in the great Catholic Churches by the poor for nothing. I was crossing Barcelona once in a taxi, and was having a chat with the driver en route. It was at the time of the Civil War; and my taxi driver complained that the Communists - by closing all the churches and prohibiting religious festivals - had taken all the splendour and pageantry away from them: there was nothing left for them now except the bull fights.!!

The Church and Medical Science.

The Church too, helped in the development of the sciences - especially of medicine. It was only when the monks began to maintain hospitals for the sick - looking after them for long periods at a stretch - that it was made easy to observe the comparative effects of various methods of treatment in a scientific manner.

The Ministry of Agriculture.

In many modern states there is a ministry of agriculture whose function it is to study and advise on all subjects connected with the land - tilling and drainage, rearing of stock,

sowing of crops, and so forth. Over a thousand years ago this work was, to a large extent, carried on by the monks who taught the people how to do many of these things, and by the best method - by example.

Education.

Nowadays in most civilised countries there is compulsory education by the State; but it was not so until comparatively recently. During the Middle Ages it was to the religious houses that boys were sent to be educated. It was only after the so-called "reformation" and the dissolution of the monasteries, that most lay schools were founded, just as it was during the same period - and for the same reason - that the Poor Laws came into existence, and Alms Houses were set up. The Church even had a form of adult education from the beginning - the sermon.

Religious Orders in the Church.

One of the most characteristic and impressive features of the Catholic Church is to be found in Her Religious Orders. These are wonderful institutions, unique in their nature, origin and function. New Religious Orders come into being when there is a new "sensitive period"⁽¹⁾ in society. They arise in response to some new need in the body politic: or - to speak biologically - the function creates the organism. The new need is there (function) and it calls into being the new organ (i.e. a new religious order).

Again and again, in history, new religious orders have burst forth with a sudden and tremendous impetus, astonishing everyone with their vitality and growth; as, for instance, when the new mendicant orders - the Franciscans and the Dominicans - spread with surprising swiftness over the whole of Europe, and even beyond.

Individual charity is an excellent thing and accomplishes much; but when that charity - gathering together a host of individuals who are fired by the same enthusiasm - becomes organised and disciplined into a religious order there seems almost no limit to what it can accomplish. In this respect religious orders can be compared to the powerful new machines now used in agriculture - tractors, combines, bulldozers and the like. One man working by himself at ploughing or harvesting can do a certain amount of good work; but it is almost as nothing compared with what can be accomplished, in the same or even less time, by one of these machines. Even so a religious order is able to accomplish far more than any single individual, or a great number of individuals all working singly as isolated individuals.

But of course there is nothing mechanical about a religious order, since it depends ultimately upon individual vocations under the guidance of the Holy Spirit who has brought the order into existence. Furthermore they do not wear out, like machines; for many of them have been in existence for centuries;

witness the Benedictine Order which was founded by St. Benedict as long ago as the fourth century, and is still going as strongly as ever.

Wanted, a New Order: - a Montessori Order.

I have often considered the possibility and propriety of forming a new religious order to carry on my work. But such a task is not for me: nevertheless some day someone may arise and found such an order. I am not thinking primarily of an order that would have as its aim just to teach my method of education. I am obliged to repeat, again and again, that I do not think my main work has been the founding of the "Montessori Method" (though of course, there is such a method). If I have done anything that will last it is primarily due to the fact that - under Providence - I have been the instrument through whom certain higher possibilities in childhood have been revealed which were hitherto not generally known. And with this discovery there has come a new conception of the immense potential constructive powers for building up a better civilization that are latent in children - powers which hitherto have never been fully implemented, not even by the Church. For I verily believe that, without the support ("concourse") of these newly revealed ("natural") virtues in children, even religious influences cannot have their fullest effect, according to the well-known theological principle that Grace builds on Nature. The aim of this new order would be, with and through the help

of the Church, to make use of these newly-discovered constructive powers in "normalised children" (1) for the building up of a stable, harmonious, and peaceful Christian civilisation. I believe that all the great civilisations of the past, including our own, have been incomplete and unstable because they have been built only on "adult values": they have never taken into account these immense powers latent in that "other rôle of humanity" - the Child.

The need for such an order is urgent. I have taught and given diplomas for forty years but yet nothing really great has been accomplished - nothing, that is, corresponding to the immense need, and the equally immense possibilities for good which are waiting to be made actual.

E. M. Standing.

Muniello

Coleville Rd

Cloumel

Co Tyrone

Ireland.

A visit to Dr. Montessori's New School at Laren in Holland.

Thirty years ago there took place in Rome, one of the most important events in the history of Education. A young lady Doctor, (the first lady to take a medical degree in Italy) jeopardised a brilliant medical career to carry out an educational experiment with a number of poor children in one of the worst slums in the Eternal City. This was Dr. Maria Montessori; and thus came into existence the first so-called Montessori School - though at that time it was called the Casa dei Bambini - the Children's Home.

Such wonderful things happened in that unlikely place; such amazing revelations came forth from those slum children of 4 to 6 years of age, that people began to come from all parts of the world to see them - like pilgrims to a new Mecca. All sorts of conditions of men and women, came, from the King and Queen of Italy downwards. Ambassadors (including the British,) Society people, statesmen, University professors, teachers of course, but also Doctors, Psychologists - and they came from as far East and West, as Japan and America.

What was happening there? Whatever it was it was news, and soon the Press of every civilised country took it up. Mc Clures Magazine in the States ran into a second edition on the strength of it - an unheard of thing; in England the "World's Work" made a scoop - and before long the name Montessori was known from pole to pole.

What was all the fuss about? Why all this excitement over some 40 children in a slum tenement?

P] Because in that dreary and unpromising environment, like a flower springing from a dung-hill, there had blossomed forth a new revelation of the spirit of childhood, of its possibilities, capabilities, its power and beauty, Dr. Montessori had discovered that the small child we usually see is not the real child; but a spoiled edition of him - spoiled by wrong treatment by adults, parents and teachers. These children in the San Lorenzo quarter of Rome had revealed new characteristics. They showed that even children of four and six, love to work as well as play - or even better, that they have a passionate love of order; that they acquire the elements of culture (Reading and Writing etc.) spontaneously; and that they possess an astonishing self-discipline.

X We do not intend to re-write this story, which is a generation old, for we have a new one. Since that time Dr. Montessori Schools have sprung up all over the world, not only for children in Europe and America, but also for woolly headed ~~piccaninnies~~^{kids} on the banks of the Congo, for yellow almond eyed bambini by the Yangste; and brown ones by the Ganges. Even amongst the Eskimos, the Montessori new system has found its way, and in tropic islands in equatorial seas.

When these striking things happened, 30 years ago as described above, Dr. Montessori, like Byron, woke up to find herself famous. People came thronging from all over the world asking her to teach them her secret - that secret which unlocks

the soul of the child.

In consequence, she was reluctantly obliged to give up her more immediate contact with the children, to give courses for teachers. During the past 25 years she has given 24 of these International Training Courses; and has trained some 3,000 teachers who have gone back to over 40 different countries. Many of these Courses were given in London but others in Rome, Berlin, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Buenos Ayres, Chicago, San Francisco etc. But wherever she has gone she has taught the same message in one form or another - that we must liberate the child from the oppression exercises over it ^A albeit - unconsciously - by adults, by parents, nurses, teachers etc. This can only be done by establishing a new sort of relationship between Child and Adult. We adults must stand back and give the child room to grow. This does not mean we must abandon the child, or leave it to its own resources. It means we must help the child to help itself. As in every other living being so in the child growth comes about through certain power placed there by Nature, powers which lead through self-activity to growth - and development.

No one can grow for another; and we adults try to do too much for the child, and in the wrong way. Every time we help the child when that help is not necessary we not only do no good to it, but we actually hinder development.

The child has immense powers of apprehending knowledge spontaneously; and our best way to help him is to arrange his environment that he can "take" in knowledge by his own God

given powers - directly from things - by his own self-activity.

Our part as Educators is to stand by, and help the child to become a self-directing, independent personality - one who can act for itself, choose for itself, decide for itself, govern itself, think for itself.

Such being Dr. Montessori's aim, it is not surprising that her system has not found enthusiastic support in the totalitarian countries - where independence and thinking for oneself are not encouraged, (to put it mildly!)

So Dr. Montessori left Italy and settled in Barcelona Spain, where she worked for several years. When came the Spanish Civil War, and the Revolution in Barcelona. It was only through the help of the British Government that she was enabled to get away, (at half an hour's notice) on a British battle ship. She then went to settle in Holland, where her system has been much appreciated and has received much government recognition. This was one might say, her second exile. So now at 68 years of age, well past the age when most people retire, she found herself with straitened means - in a strange country. But she felt that her destiny was not yet accomplished. She had more yet to give the world. So with the indomitable spirit of the true genius thirty years after the first school in Rome - she started a new school at Laren, a residential suburb of Amsterdam. Fancy starting a new school at nearly 70, and in a foreign country, and in a language she did not know! Such is the power of genius to rise above obstacles!

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THE MONTESSORI METHOD AND CATHOLICISM.

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HOW IT STARTED.

Half a century ago - on November the 10th, 1910, to be exact - a small but impressive ceremony took place in a house in the Corso Vittorio Emanuele, Rome, just at the corner of the little piazza of Santa Maria Nuova. A room in this house had been converted into a private Chapel, and for some time before this Mass had been celebrated there daily. On this particular occasion, after the Communion, four ladies knelt before the Altar; and whilst the Priest held up the Blessed Sacrament, they solemnly repeated all together the following words:-

"Before the Majesty of God I desire to consecrate myself to the service of the Catholic Church, offering myself as a holocaust to Jesus Christ our Lord. I desire to follow the path of His Divine Will, embracing my sweet cross with the intention so truly to live that, if it be His will, the Church of Christ, in a reformed humanity, may triumph amidst the splendours of civilization."

The house in question was Dr. Maria Montessori's own dwelling, and the kneeling figures were the Dottoressa herself and the innermost trio of her devoted followers.

(Their names were Signorine Fideli, Ballerina, and Maccheroni).

Such was the real beginning of the Montessori Movement, though at the time very few persons were aware of it, nor for that matter have been aware of it since. It presented indeed much more the appearance of the beginning of a new Religious Order than the start of a new educational method, - a point to which we shall return later on.

The leader of this little group - Dr. Montessori - was already before this a dedicated soul, dedicated to the propagation of the new and wonderful revelation which had been vouchsafed to her by "The New Children" (as they came to be called). By that time she had already pledged herself to the task of placing before the eyes of the world those higher qualities in childhood, which had unfolded themselves before her wondering eyes in that slum tenement-holding in the Via Giusti, Rome.

This is not the place to describe those happenings which, even to-day reads more like a fairy tale than a sober scientific description. Our immediate aim is rather to note the effect these wonderful events had upon the young Doctor and lecturer on Anthropology at the University of Rome. Let us quote her own words, taken from the Secret of Childhood, Chapter II.

After describing many of the amazing things that these children did, under the title What they showed Me, she goes on:-
"It took time for me to convince myself that this was not an illusion. After each new experience proving the truth I said to myself, 'I won't believe it yet, I will believe it next time.' So for a long time I remained incredulous, and at the same time deeply stirred and trepidant. How many times did I not reprove the children's teacher when she told me what the children had done of themselves. (The only thing that impresses me I would severely reply to her is the truth,' and I remember the teacher answered without taking offence, often moved to tears, 'You are right. When I see such things I think it must be the holy angels who are inspiring these children.'

"One day, in great emotion, I took my heart in my two hands, as though to encourage it to see the height of faith, and I stood respectfully before the children saying to myself 'Who are you then?' Have I perhaps met with the children who were held in Christ's arms and to whom the Divine words were spoken? I will follow you to enter with you into the Kingdom of Heaven. And holding up the torch of faith I went on my way."

It was on this - or on some similar occasion - that one of Montessori's friends, Signorine Maccheroni, one of the original three, entering the room unnoticed found Montessori standing entranced before the children, watching them with a sort of reverent awe and murmuring to herself. "Io mi vuoto! Io mi vuoto!" (I dedicate myself).

It is important and interesting to notice that, even at this stage, there is no mention of the Montessori Method. We see that what really has impressed Montessori is not a method at all but the revelation of unexpected acquired qualities in childhood. Actually, at that time, the Montessori Method as we know it to-day did not really exist; for - as Montessori never ceased to say in later years - it was the Discovery which caused the Method, not the Method that caused the Discovery. This is a point which cannot be over emphasised; for, as we see in the above incident, the task to which Montessori had dedicated herself was not the dissemination of the Montessori Method of education, or of any method, but the making known to the world those hitherto unknown characteristics in children which, up to that time, had (with one or two exceptions) been hidden under the mask of "deviations."

UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE VATICAN.

It is interesting to note in passing that the Priest, who used to come to celebrate Mass at that time in Montessori's house, lived in the Vatican City, where he was one of the Secretaries of Pope Pius X. He was active in helping Pius X to start the new Liturgical Movement. "He was, (Montessori also told me) very interested in my method, and entertained the idea of starting a new Religious Order to propagate it, an idea which was also in my mind at that time. He was, (she added with a dash of

mischievous) rather jealous of the Franciscans who wanted us all to become Franciscan Tertiaries! "

Another point, which is rather interesting to notice because it shows that at that date Montessori was already interested in things liturgical - is that when this Priest celebrated Mass in her house he did so according to a more ancient ritual, with a more antique style of vestments, with the Missal placed on a cushion. And during the celebration he faced the congregation from the other side of the Altar. Incidentally he was a delicate man and so she sent a carriage for him every morning to the Vatican which was quite an expense. It was this same Priest who started a Society for boys who were to act as servers at the Masses in the Catacombs. He was a Jesuit, and his nick name "Toraquemada" but his real name was

Thus we can see that the Montessori movement was founded by a Catholic; and was born and cradled in a Catholic atmosphere, almost we might say under the shadow of the Vatican.

ITALY THE APPROPRIATE COUNTRY.

It seems peculiarly appropriate that an idea of education so linked up with a most spiritual view of the possibilities of childhood should begin in a manner described above. And also it seems suitable that of all the countries in Europe - the Montessori Movement should have begun in Italy; and this, not only because Rome is the centre of the Catholic Church, but also because of a certain characteristic in the Italians themselves.

For Italy is par excellence the country of the Madonna and the Bambino, and anyone who has lived there for any length of time knows that the Italians as a people, in spite of many short-comings largely due to ignorance, show a special affection and reverence for small children.

Perhaps that I can best illustrate what I mean by describing a short incident. I remember on one occasion being in a crowded tram in Rome. A poor woman sat next to me holding a very small baby in her arms; it could not have been more than six or eight months. The little creature's bright eyes were attracted by the shining hilt of a young Italian Officer, who was standing in the crowded gangway along the middle of the bus. The baby put out its tiny little fingers in an effort to touch this attractive and shining object. At this the mother, who (as I said) was obviously poor and uneducated, feeling ashamed, began to draw the little one away, lest its attentions should embarrass the Officer. This young man however took in the whole situation at a glance. He smiled at the little one; and then quietly unclasped the belt to which his sword was attached, and for the rest of his quite considerable stay in the tram held the bright hilt towards the infant, so that it could not only see, but could feel and handle it. The whole incident happened quite simply and naturally, as if it were quite a normal and natural thing to do; and the rest of the people who were travelling in the tram seemed to regard it in the same light. I do not think

that in most other countries it would happen so naturally, without attracting any special attention.

THE MONTESSORI METHOD CAN ONLY OBTAIN ITS
FULL FRUITION IN A CATHOLIC ATMOSPHERE.

We have noted, above, how the Montessori method started in a Catholic atmosphere and in a Catholic country. We would go even further and say that the Montessori principles ^{only} ~~can never~~ attain their full ^{or} expansion, ~~come to their complete fruition,~~ ~~except~~ in a Catholic Society.

This may strike some readers as very narrow and bigotted - indeed as a statement which can easily be refuted just by looking at the history of the Montessori Method during the last fifty years. It will be appropriate, then, at this juncture, to pause for a while in order to expound this seemingly prejudiced point of view more fully.

To begin with let us note that it would be quite foolish to deny that there are hundreds of good Montessori schools in all parts of the world which are not run by Catholics at all, but carried on by people of all sorts of other Christian denominations; and run by atheists. Indeed from the very beginning what was most noticeable about this movement was the universal appeal which the Montessori method made to persons of all nations, colours and creeds. In fact we ourselves wrote in the first edition of this book-- as follows:-

"No circumstance proclaims more loudly the essential soundness of the Montessori ^{pedagogical} principles than this: That they know no distinction of ^{religion} colour, race or climate.

~~Montessori schools flourish as happily amongst the so-called Teutonic races as amongst those of the Mediterranean countries. The method been applied with equally good results to the almond-eyed bambini on the banks of the Yantze, as to the bronzed children by the Ganges, as well as to the woolly-haired piccaninnies on the banks of the Niger. During the past thirty years the Montessori principles have been applied by persons of all religious beliefs and none and always with beneficial results."~~

our existence in the natural order, which every man enters at birth, simply by the virtue of being born into the human race as a child of Adam. The other kind of existence, which it is possible for us to have in our life is the Supernatural Order, into which we are "born again" at Baptism. This life in the supernatural order is the life of Grace, it is in fact a participation in the life of God (Of course in so far as other Christian denominations teach and practice the same doctrine these remarks would apply to them also.

As human beings born into the natural order we possess certain potentialities. We may regard these as germs of development which in due course, as they unfold, build up and make use of our various natural faculties. And this applies to every

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Nevertheless we still assert that the Montessori method can never reach its full attainment except in a Catholic environment. Of course this is only another way of saying that any human being cannot unfold his fullest possibilities without the assistance of the Church. If one reflects for a moment on one of the most fundamental truths in Catholic teaching one sees that it is quite natural for this to be so. Or rather, it would be nearer to the point if we would say it was quite "supernatural" for this to be so! For, more definitely and more completely than any other Christian body, the Catholic Church teaches that we live in a two-fold order; or shall we say that we carry on a two-fold life.

One is our existence in the natural order, which every man enters at birth, simply by the virtue of being born into the human race as a child of Adam. The other kind of existence, which it is possible for us to have is our life in the Supernatural Order, into which we are "born again" at Baptism. This life in the supernatural order is the life of Grace, it is in fact a participation in the life of God (Of course in so far as other Christian denominations teach and practice the same doctrine these remarks would apply to them also.

As human beings born into the natural order we possess certain potentialities. We may regard these as germs of development which in due course, as they unfold, build up and make use of our various natural faculties. And this applies to every

child in every Montessori school, or any other kind of school. But what is certain is that under the Montessori system, these natural faculties (in which reason and will are the highest) attain best development. In this sense the Montessori system can be said to bring out the fullest development in every country, clime and race, as stated in the quotation above.

But over and above the life of the natural faculties, there is this higher supernatural life, the life of Grace. In this second life our natural faculties are raised and strengthened to operate in a manner higher than they could possibly do in their purely natural conditions - because -, as I said before in this added life we share in the very life of God Himself.

We are not concerned here to prove the existence of the supernatural life which centres round, and is nourished by the life of the Church. We only wish to make clear that - however well the child's faculties may be developed through the Montessori system - its life is incomplete unless he is enabled to carry on, at the same time, this "second life" in the supernatural order. This is the sense in which we mean that "only in a Catholic atmosphere can the Montessori method come to its fullest fruition." This is true of course not only of the Montessori method but of any other system of education practiced in Catholic schools all over the world.

At the same time however it cannot be denied that, to a certain extent, but there is a distinction here. The difference lies in the fact (stated above) that in the Montessori method we find a fuller development of the natural faculties than in other methods. And this is a matter of very great importance, because it is one of the most fundamental principles of Catholic theology that "Grace builds on nature." Or as Pope Benedict XV, on the occasion of the Proclamation of the heroic virtues of Bernadette of Lourdes, said :- "God habitually prepares on the lower plain of nature that order or disposition most appropriate for the superstructure of Grace."

("Dio ha l'abitudine di preparare nel piano inferiore della natura la disposizione (l'ordine) piu conveniente alla super - costruzione della grazia.")

Of course if one had to choose between a life in which there was the fullest development of the natural faculties but without Grace and a life where there was the Grace of Faith but with a very poor development of the natural faculties, one would unhesitatingly choose the latter. Indeed St. Thomas Aquinas says somewhere that "the good of a single Grace is higher than the natural good of the whole Universe." But strange as it may sound some Catholics seem to think that the fullest development in the natural faculties is a matter of indifference. They behave in such a way as to make one think that a study of the child's natural faculties in the mental sphere is a matter of

little or no importance. And you can find many Catholic teachers - holy nuns included! - who have quite wrong ideas on the manner in which the child mind naturally works and build up its system of ideas. This is a serious matter for St. Thomas says "It is clearly a wrong opinion to say with regard to the truths of faith, that it is a matter of indifference what we think of creative things, provided one has the right opinion of about God; for an error about creatures reacts upon our knowledge of God."

And children are creatures, and further it is true that Montessori has illuminated certain basic truths with regard to their mental, social and spiritual development. It is surely our duty as Catholics to acquaint ourselves with all this, not only on the ground mentioned in above quotation by St. Thomas but for the very practical reason that by doing so we can best help on their education both in the natural and supernatural order.

It is still not uncommon to find Catholic Teachers who run Catholic Schools, astonishingly indifferent with regard to the study of method and child psychology, complacently carrying on from year to year, without a shadow of misgiving that they might have something to learn in the study of method.

I can vividly remember, to this day the shock that it gave to me, shortly after I had become a Catholic, when I visited a Religious Instruction class in a Convent School somewhere in the West of Ireland. There sat a formidable looking nun with a Catechism Book in one hand and a cane in the other, surrounded by

a circle of children who looked just about as mystified and bewildered as a group of cattle at an auction. "Sean," said the Teacher, "what is Grace?" Whereupon Sean began to chant in a singsong voice what he had learned on another occasion. But in repeating it he made a mistake. This was surprising as he had certainly never understood what it was all about. Suddenly his tentative efforts were cut short 'with a bang' as the cane descended on his outstretched hand!

It would be hard to maintain that such a method, devoid of all emotion except fear could lead to a living vital spontaneous interest those truths the Catechism sets out to Teach.

[Faint, illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]

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MONTESSORI AND THE POPES.

We have already indicated how the Montessori Movement started as it were "in the shadow of the Vatican." We must now indicate how, during her long life, Montessori kept in touch with the Vatican and the Hierarchy. Five Pontiffs reigned on the Papal throne during her life:-

- Pius IX 1846 - 1878
- Leo XIII1878 - 1903
- St. Pius ~~X~~.....1903 - 1914
- Benedict XV....1914 - 1922
- Pius XII1922 ..

With all except the first named Montessori was in some way connected; and we might almost include Pope John XXIV, because Montessori was in personal touch with him when he was Patriarch of Venice (See later). X *see remarks*

First of all Leo XIII, whether Montessori actually met this great and learned Pope we do not know, but we do know that when this young lady made up her mind to study medicine there was a great fuss and commotion both in the University of Rome and amongst the Blacks, or papal party in Rome, which had the majority sway amongst the influential strata of Roman society. Finally the matter was placed before the Pope Leo XIII who is reported to have replied that he "knew of no authority which could forbid the mission of healing to a woman."

It was doubtless through the instrumentality of Monsignor Ferbere, mentioned above, who used to say Mass in Montessori's house that she was enabled to have a private interview with Pope Benedict XV. Monsignor Ferbere was, by the way, Pope Benedict's Confessor at that time. "In that interview," said the Dottoressa, I began to speak to him of the idea I had in mind at that time (see below p.) of founding a White Cross Movement for children who were war victims; but he brushed this aside and said "Tell me about your Method," which I did; and we talked together for nearly two hours." Very shortly after this interview Dr. Montessori went to Spain, where one day she received a messenger at her hotel from the Pope Benedict XV, of which the burden was that she should return to Italy and found a new organisation. The very next day came the news that Pope Benedict had fallen ill; and at the same time Montessori herself fell ill. By the time she had recovered His Holiness himself had died and his Confessor tucked away in some remote place and forgotten. This Pope also sent her a signed photograph of himself with his apostolic blessing on her work for the children. It ran -

"May the Apostolic Benediction which we confer upon our beloved daughter Maria Montessori be a pledge of those graces and heavenly favours which we wish her in order to render fruitful of good the method of scientific pedagogy applied to infant education in the Case dei Bambini."

Benedict XV also had Montessori's book placed in the Vatican Library.

MONTESSORI AND POPE JOHN XXIV.

"Our present Holy Father, when he was still Patriarcho of Venice, was pleased to celebrate Holy Mass for the participants of the IVth National Conference; and at the end of the ceremony he addressed a particularly cordial greeting to those attending.

In a brief discourse he stressed the value of Montessori education, "inspired as it is by respect and love for the child;" and he spoke of the fundamental principles of the method. He also recalled his meeting with Dr. Montessori when he was Apostolic Nuncio in Paris.

"It is possible (he said) to see a clear analogy between the mission of the Shepherd of the Church and that of the prudent and generous educator in the Montessori method. The Montessori directress who with tenderness, with love, and with a wise valorisation of the best gifts, knows how to discover and bring to light the most hidden virtues and capacities of the child."

(Extract from the Italian Montessori magazine -

LA VITA DELL' INFANZIA)

MONTESSORI AND THE POPES (CONTINUED).

No doubt some future biographer of Dr. Montessori will deal with this whole subject more fully. Meanwhile we append here a report which appeared in a Montessori Journal, from which it will be seen some twenty years later Montessori was still in touch with the Vatican authorities.

"There has been a course of study at Rome, held in the Vatican City for teaching nuns, at which more than 1300 took part, under the august presidency of the Prefect of the Congregation of Seminaries and Universities, Cardinal Pizzardo.

"During this Congress Signorina Sorge held a conference on the Montessori Method. After the conference Monsignor Ruffini, Secretary of the Congregation spoke with profound appreciation of the Montessori Method "because I have seen it in practice" His Excellency, Cardinal Pizzardo, also spoke, and warmly invited all the Sisters present to study the Method seriously, and put it into practice. Even Father Mario Barbere who in the past had written a severe criticism of the Method (see p) spoke in warm favour of the method at the end of one of his lectures saying "that the educational environment established by Maria Montessori, as a help and defence for the development of the child, was perfect; and perfect too was the Preparation of the Teacher for the application of her method. ~~Monsignor Ruffini also declared that certain statements by Padre Gemelli against the method were wrong-ful assertions.~~"

At the inauguration of the Course came a telegram from Cardinal Mogeione in the name of the Pope, giving his benediction, with every good wish that the generous and genial plans should realise themselves and bring forth fruits in the light of Christian thinking.

After this Benediction, and interest shown by Pius X and Benedict XV it is certainly gratifying to receive similar proofs of good will from a Pope still living and of such prestige and individuality as Pope Pius XII.

from Vita dell ' Infanzia.

MONTESSORI AND THE POPES (notes supplied by Mr Abs Joosten)

1) Regarding St Pius Xth there is the blessing given to the children and Mammolina in 1911. "Ai cari Bambini dell' asilo Montessori ,accettando con vera gratitudine i loro cordiali auguri per la santa Pasqua , col voto che si wonservino sempre buoni ; alla loro diletta Maestra (that was Mammolina) colla piu sincera congratulazione , ed alle Religiose francescane Missionare di Maria , con partiulare benevolenza ,auspice delle divine grazie impartiamo di cuore l' Apostolica Benedizione " Dal Vaticano , la Domenica di Pasqua del 1911 , Pius PP X "

2) It seems St Pius X gave personal permission for the Course which Mammolina gave at the Mother -House of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (via Giusti) in 1910 to be held there in an autograph . This is reported by Gunter Schultz and quoted from Muggiani-Griffini , Gemma : Einiges uber die Entstehung und Verbreitung der "Case dei Bambini " in Der Saeman , Leipzig , /Berlin , Jg1913 H.9 S 601-409 .

3) Pope Pius XII sent a personal blessing for her 80th birthday , which was read out at the ceremony in Perugia Municipal Palace on August 31st 1950 byt the Archbishop there. Then there is of course the private audience he gave her in '47, when she was taken up to his apartments in his private lift and found the roll-chair of Pius X waiting for her at the lift -door to take her to the Pope's private library .

At that time also Cardinal Pizzardo lent her his car during her stay in Rome , but later there was some misunderstanding between him and this same Cardinal - who was Prefect of the Congregation of Studies . The Holy See also sent its condolences at her death and the Internuntiate Secretary attended a condolence meeting in Leiden Holland .

and intervened to arrange for her burial at the Catholic cemetery at Noordwijk.

4th At the XIth International Montessori Congress, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the Movement in 1957, the Holy See was also represented by and the Hon. Maria Badaloni who was the representative expressing the hope "that the Montessori Method may be an ever more living, vital and valid instrument for the formation of man in the most complete sense of the word - that is Christians"

5) The Spanish Representative at the Xth International Montessori Congress in Paris (' 53) referred to the message of St Pius X when saying "Nous savons que cela signifie (this work) comme le savait le Saint Pere Pie X quand il benit l'oeuvre montessorienne, en appelant ^{1'} l'oeuvre de la regeneration de l'enfant".

With regard to Mammolina's relations with the Hierarchy I cannot say very much but they were many and close. Cardinal Ferrari, the Archbishop of Madras often came to see her when she was interned at Adyar during the war (in the ^{PLA?} space of a IOO Pillars Ed.) He established relations with the Holy See at that time, which had made enquiries about her and from whom she heard at least once during the war.

I do not know the name of the priest who celebrated Mass in her house in the early days when there was talk of an Order; but Father Tacchi Venturi S.J. ("The Black Pope!") had a lot to do with ^{the} the movement at the start and remained ~~a~~ a life-long sympathiser.

I know about the great revival of Montessori interest in the U.S.A but I do not

see how I could leave the East just now :to establish things on a firm basis here is the task of a life - time . The lucrative side of it does not interest me at all . Deus providebit . They do want teachers badly though and offer fantastic salaries . I had several letters from Sister Monica (California) asking if we could send any teachers from her which is not at all practical If you want any news about Ceylon contact Sr Ita (at St Euphrasia's Good Shepherd Convent , Clifton , Montenegro , Cork)

This gifted lady sees the great problem of education as a whole. She knows that the only sound way is to begin with the child, as St. Paul did and not with the teacher, as we are doing to-day. The sole secret of her method is so to let the child teach itself as it is always so eagerly longing to do. If that idea were acted upon through boyhood and girlhood, we should witness the growth of brain, power and of character as the natural and inevitable consequences. There are, indeed, few teachers of strong wills and strong desires who believe in this deep and vital truth of self-teaching as the only way and true way, and whose intention is to guide their pupils towards freedom of natural development.

But there are indeed few and far between. Too many of our teachers have to abandon all the wondrous plans with which they began to thought and fall in with the rigid rules of some code or curriculum of teaching which is wholly imposed, and artificial and has no relation whatever to the wishes or the needs, tendencies or abilities of those who are to be taught. It is in this way that scores of strong and ambitious boys and girls are turned out of their institutions and swayed by the fact that they would have to "teach" in it any manner that the schools are so terrible in professing failures.

It is simply to save these and thousands of other children that our parents and teachers are striving over their children to the utmost of a power and growing expertise and profession of teaching deprives everything of the idea of youth learning anything for itself (including games) is out of fashion in this generation, although it was very much alive in the Victorian Era. But though teachers have lost the art and teaching is everywhere it is still possible to suggest that our teaching should be as natural and arbitrary than it is becoming. Nature is and the great example to follow in all things, and Nature's way of teaching itself is seen in the eagerness of little children to be taught by mothers. We have tried to impose a method of education upon the children from above which is and must be wholly artificial and unnatural. Madame Montessori's method seems to amount to - Nature's way - by Nature's aid or self-teaching, but to Nature fortified by some.

Dr. Montessori shows, upon every page of her writing, an intuitive and an instinctive knowledge of the child character which is based upon her true genius for a sympathetic penetration of its inner thoughts and feelings. After long study and practice she has come to the conclusion that the only real education is auto-education, which is more simply styled Self-Teaching. If the baby child is only let alone it will begin learning from the first moment of opening its eyes upon this strange, new world of life and motion, and, unless restrained or put off, it will go on doing so. This is all quite spontaneous and from within, and through the child's own growing power, it is always groping for the light.

* * *

This gifted lady sees the great problem of education as a whole. She knows that the only sound way is to begin with the child, as St. Paul did, and not with the teacher, as we are doing to-day. The sole secret of her method is to let the child teach itself as it is always so eagerly longing to do. If that idea were acted upon through boyhood and girlhood, we should witness the growth of brain power and of character as the natural and inevitable consequences. There are some few teachers of strong wills and stout hearts who believe in this deep and vital truth of self-teaching as the only live and true way, and whose method is to guide their pupils into full freedom of natural development.

But these are indeed few and far between. Too many of our teachers have to abandon all the zealous plans with which they began in thought, and fall in with the rigid rules of some code or curriculum of teaching which is wholly invented and artificial and has no relation whatever to the wishes or the needs, tendencies or abilities of those who are to be taught. It is in this way that eager, craving and ambitious boys and girls are turned out of their true course and switched off the line they would love to follow. Is it any wonder that our schools are so fertile in producing failures?

The child always wants to live and to learn. Let it do so in the fullest freedom, and it will work its own way upward to its own desired end. Parents and teachers can really do little more than help the child, the boy or the girl, to carry out their own deeply desired and nature-inspired intentions. But they can, of course, easily do much to hinder, and so hamper their development and add to the growing tale of failure. It is a sad and sorrowful story that is made by the record of our efforts at education. It is often the ancient conflict between the old and the young. It is frequently brought about by the claims of parental Experience to over-ride the intuitions and energies of growing youth. But this much-vaunted experience may be, and often is, merely the doing a thing in the wrong way for a long time, which is no proof of any genius or wisdom in the doer.

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It is mainly to save time and trouble, and for social reasons, that parents to-day are handing over their children to the schools at a great and growing expense. The profession of teaching flourishes exceedingly. The idea of youth learning anything for itself (including games) is out of fashion in this generation, although it was very much alive in the Victorian Era. But though learners have lost the day and teaching is triumphant, it is still possible to suggest that our teaching should be less artificial and arbitrary than it is becoming. Nature is still the great example to follow in all things, and Nature's way of teaching is to be seen in the eagerness of little children to learn by imitation. We have in fact imposed a method of education upon the children from above which is and must be quite artificial and mechanical. Madame Montessori's method seeks to return to Nature—not to Nature unaided or self-sufficient, but to Nature fortified by Grace.

MARIA MONTESSORI—AN APPRECIATION

THE century in which we live has sometimes been called 'The Century of the Child'; and certain it is there has never been another epoch in which there have arisen so many movements centred in the child and its welfare. No one has better represented this movement than the great Italian educationalist—Dr Maria Montessori—whose death was announced last month.

Many others have loved children, worked for them, and with them; but no one—since Our Lord spoke those startling words of appreciation of children to His generation—no one has so completely understood the soul of the child in its depth and greatness, in its immense potentialities, and in the mysterious laws of its development.

What Wordsworth said of the child—'Oh thou whose exterior semblance does belie thy soul's immensity'—was the foundation of her work. It was the child himself, his soul, his person, which she cared about, not just 'Education' in the narrow sense of the word. Because children are living, immortal souls they are entitled to as much reverence and respect—as persons—as adults; even more since they are nearer to the streaming waters of Baptism. In fact, Montessori's whole life's work might be summed up as a defence of him whom she used to call *Il cittadino dimenticato* ('The Forgotten Citizen') and for the establishment of his rights.

Alone amongst the long line of great European educators—Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Herbart, etc.—she maintained that the one really essential preparation for a would-be teacher is a moral and spiritual one. No one, she said, is fit to direct the child's development who has not striven to purge herself of those two sins, to which teachers are most prone,—Pride and Anger.

Most people think of Dr Montessori as the

founder of the educational method which bears her name, but her real significance lies deeper. She will go down in history as one who discovered and revealed to the world qualities in childhood different from and higher than those usually attributed to children. By giving freedom (in a biological sense) to children in a specially prepared environment, rich in motives of activities, she was able to show to an astonished world children of 4½-5½ years who learned to read and write spontaneously; who chose to work rather than play or eat sweets; who loved order and silence; who displayed long-sustained and quite spontaneous intellectual concentration; who developed a real social life in which mutual helpfulness took the place of competition; who, though able to carry on their life with astonishing independence of adult help, were nevertheless extraordinarily docile and obedient, and finally children in whom liberty, far from producing chaos, resulted in a hitherto unknown collective discipline.

Only amongst Christians can Dr Montessori's system be appreciated to the full, and only amongst Catholics to the fullest, and this—not only because she herself was a Catholic and wrote books on the teaching of the Catholic Faith—but because there exists a striking natural affinity between the psychology underlying her method and what one might call the psychological method of the Catholic Church.

Dr Montessori was *par excellence* the great interpreter of the child: and though she herself has passed on from the scene of her labours her work will still go on. Indeed, it will last as long as children are born into this world to grow up in it with loving hearts, eager searching minds, and eyes wide open with wonder.

E. MORTIMER STANDING

Reprinted from the Westminster Cathedral Chronicle, June, 1952

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THE MONTESSORI METHOD

BY A NUN OF THE ASSUMPTION CONVENT

KENSINGTON SQUARE, LONDON, W. 8.

The Montessori Method **must be studied from many angles in order to be understood.** It can be compared to a delicate piece of machinery, every part of which is indispensable to the good working of every other part, each being necessary, no one being sufficient. A survey of the apparatus, a few visits to a class; a hurried reading of some of the basic ideas, can hardly fail to leave impressions not only incomplete, but false.

The centre of a circle can be reached by an infinite number of straight lines from the circumference. So the centre of this Method can be approached from many angles. The explorer will do well to cultivate a humble spirit, remembering that a little child was given to us all as a model by the Teacher of Teachers, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

One approach is to consider the statement that in a Montessori class children are given **liberty in a prepared environment.** What is meant here by liberty? We say that animals have free movement, that a dog is at liberty to run where he will, to pursue friend or enemy or the scent of a distant rabbit. Is he free? He is free to follow his instincts, he is not free to choose between them, but is necessarily drawn by the strongest at the moment. A little child at school has reached the age of free movement; and a peculiarity of this method is that he is not kept still, in a fixed place on bench or at desk. He may move about the room, choose the place for his chair and tables, spread his mat where he likes. This **liberty of movement** combined with other features such as the small size of the furniture has been a beneficent reaction against the unnatural immobility of school children to which many miseries such as ill health and bad sight were attributable. A child needs to move freely if he is to acquire grace and control of movement, and the development of the brain depends in part on the facility to change his position and use his muscles and satisfy his need of exercise when it is felt.

Our children have more than freedom of movement. The human faculty of **free choice** is provided for in an admirable way. The right use of free-will, that is, of the power of choosing between several concrete good things, is probably recognised by everyone as the highest aim in education. It follows that we should provide plentiful opportunities for the exercise of this faculty so that the child may grow up with the habit of choosing aright. There is no question of "liberty to do wrong" which is not the use of freedom but the abuse. Emphatically the children are not "allowed to do

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as they like" if this means to shout or push, to throw the apparatus about or stand on the table. This is not liberty but licence which must never enter the class. The **prepared environment** eliminates dangers, obstacles to development, even harmless superfluities. And the most necessary part of the environment is the Directress who must also be specially prepared.

Punch once depicted a harassed mother busy with her correspondence, sending a messenger into the next room with the injunction, "See what the children are doing and tell them not to." The use of frequent "don't" is discouraged, but experience soon proves what Aristotle says of good government, that it is chiefly a matter of persuasion. And the Directress learns that even a minimum of persuasive eloquence is hardly ever needed to keep children out of mischief if their environment is right. Provide them with what they need for the right exercise of their growing faculties and you will have little trouble and much joy in the response.

This leads us to the question of the **apparatus**, one of the most brilliantly successful of Dr. Montessori's achievements. A beautiful metaphor of hers will help to understand it. A field sown with the best wheat will produce a rich crop. If the seed be poor and scanty weeds will appear and may even choke the good seed. But pulling up the weeds will not enrich the crop. See, rather, that the seed sown is of the best, and plentiful, and the weeds will be ousted by the rich corn. So our children are provided with apparatus suited to their needs, to the successive sensitive periods, to the faculty for and need of work, to their amazing resources of self-development and of joy in working. Observe the children using the apparatus, reacting to it, feeding on it as it were, and growing interiorly. From the first buttoning frames, up through the primary sensorial apparatus, to the grammar and mathematical exercises, one is reminded continually of the dictum of the Scholastics: "Nihil in intellectu quod non prius in sensu." Sight, hearing, touch and the rest are the avenue to the spirit and there is no other, so that the **training of the senses** serves the spirit, opens the mind, gives it light to see by, food for thought and growth. At the right age, at the psychological moment, the child finds to his hand all that is needed by his opening faculties. His desire to handle, to look and look at leisure, are natural inner urges, God-given, which must be respected and provided for. Otherwise he will for ever lack a fineness and exactness of perception, or will be condemned to acquiring painfully later on, when the sensitive period is past, the familiarity with such things as mathematical or grammatical abstractions, which might have come to him with the pleasure of a game. No one can watch our children for long without meeting instances of the victory of **intellectual pleasure in work** that feeds the inner faculties, over restlessness, love of change, of play, of sweets, generally supposed

to come first on the list of a child's tastes. The love of sugar is nature's provision for the need a growing child has for sugar. Restlessness helps to secure muscular development. Dr. Montessori can teach those who are willing to listen that nature has provided too for the needs of the child's intellectual growth. Certain problems of mathematics are well known as bug-bears to students of secondary school age. Give these same problems in suitable form to children of seven or eight, the child will respond with joy. How is this? And why has the secret only been revealed to this generation? It has apparently required a genius with the incomparable preparation of Dr. Montessori to teach us that with the use of reason **the child acquires a taste and facility for mathematics.** But they must be presented in a form suited to his age, that is, not in words, long strings of strange words, unfamiliar, unconnected with his experience. Give him material to look at, to handle. Learn from one who knows how to help the opening mind through the senses, how to avoid hindering by well-meant but untimely help. Study the doctrine of the **sensitive periods**, have faith in the child. Appreciate the fact that God has implanted in child-nature directives that we must study and respect, to provide for them, to give them liberty. This is obedience to the law, and its reward will be the amazing discipline and docility of the children. A visitor to an infant class in a London elementary school struck by this happy docility asked the teacher how she obtained it. "By never imposing my own will" was the simple answer, revealing unawares her self-abnegation, her loving respect of the child, her obedience to the will of Him Who created and loves the child, and Who teaches the lowly of heart to see Him everywhere.

A teacher of the old school was once watching an adored nephew of three and a half struggling with a jig-saw puzzle. The last piece was hard to find, and almost out of reach, and she could not resist "helping" by putting it in its hole. A cry of distress, "Naughty Aunty, you've spoilt it" was all the thanks she got. And this remained a puzzle to her for years till she learnt, as Dr. Montessori teaches, that the baby was right. She **had** spoilt his real work, his inner development by effort. The great hard work of the child is in the laboratory of his inner self. Unlike the adult who strives to complete an outward work, the child is all intent unconsciously on a labour that no one else can do for him, on building that inner structure, invisible, spiritual, delicate, his mental life. And to protect and foster this is **the part of the Directress.** Hers is no easy task. She must prepare the environment, understanding each element and its correspondence with the child's needs. Even the magical apparatus must be presented by her in the right way with a knowledge of the sensitive periods which it is designed for, else its effect will be at best but slight. The liberty, too, needs wise and careful preparation. She must

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respect his freedom to choose his work, but she must not allow idleness. Therefore she has to distinguish between real, harmful idleness, and the time, often very long, that a child spends in acclimatising himself to a new situation, or in repeating work that he can do perfectly but from which he has not yet drawn all the benefit possible. Above all, the teacher must keep self in the background and love the child.

When long, deep and patient study has been given to these and many other points of the Montessori Method, we find that **the centre of all is the child.** All that is done and provided is for him; and from a loving study of him, his needs, his nature, comes the light that teaches all the rest. Long ago, in order to teach it was considered enough to know one's subject. Then it was discovered that it was even more necessary to know the child. But Dr. Montessori is the long waited-for leader in this science. And the child she reveals is no mere imaginary ideal, but a real, live descendant of Adam and Eve, whose **deviations** must be recognised and provided for. The mother and the directress must never be surprised by them, but must see in them a motive for helping and protecting the child, reacting against these disadvantages of his by a more plentiful output of wisdom, abnegation and love, supplying all that may develop the good, and when correction is the wisest remedy, using it. This most difficult instrument to handle in education more easily results in harm than in good. So here too Dr. Montessori offers wise counsel as to the faults to be reproved on the spot, those that will be better corrected at another moment, and those apparent faults that can safely be left to cure themselves. What wisdom and abnegation this supposes; but above all, what love!

In this hurried survey we have seen something of the incomparable provision made for the right development of the child's sensitive, spiritual and moral nature. The God of Grace is the God of Nature too, and though no method of education however perfect can raise man to the supernatural, yet the best natural preparation is only fitting for those whose heritage is the Kingdom of Heaven. The supernatural life of grace cannot be reached by the natural forces of man, by flesh and blood, by intellect and will. But as **the natural virtues are a pedestal for the supernatural,** so we must never rest until we have done the very best for the little ones who are called to be sharers of the Divine Nature. God has entrusted them to our love, not to mere instinct, and in answer to this trust we should strive to do for them the best that can be done. And one of the best benefits we could bestow upon them would be to show in its true light the wonderful work of Doctor Montessori, and to persuade parents and their helpers, whether in school or home, to give time and study to what will probably be recognised by future generations as the **greatest discovery of our day.**

A Glimpse into a Montessori School

(INFANT DEPARTMENT)

BY

E. MORTIMER STANDING, B.Sc.

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HAVE you ever visited a well-run Montessori School? If not, come with me, and you will certainly find it an amazing experience.

We find ourselves in a new and different world, a world in miniature. It is a place where adult dimensions have been left behind and everything is cut to the pattern of a little child. The gaily-coloured room is dotted all over with tables like a restaurant, but they are so small that they only reach up to your knees, and there are tiny chairs to match. In the cloak-room we see wash-basins so low that a fair-sized dog could drink out of them without standing on his hind legs, and mirrors so low that we cannot see our faces in them without bending double. Similarly the pictures and other objects which adorn the walls are about a yard from the floor. Even the black boards are arranged for the children to write on them, not the teachers. I have even been to Montessori Schools where it was necessary for the adult to stoop to enter through a door scarcely five feet high. In fact in some countries—notably Italy and Holland—a new kind of architecture is coming into existence in connection with these *Case dei Bambini* (Children's Homes) as they are called. A charming feature of some of these, in country districts, is a Campanile (belfry) whence a musical voice, sounding across the fields, summons the little ones to come and spend the day in their own little world.

Not only is everything in this world cut to suit the child's proportions physically but what is even more important to correspond also to its mental stature. All round the room we see long low cupboards, gaily painted, which are stocked with an immense variety of interesting and fascinating occupations, each of which extends an invitation to the child, saying as it were, "Come and use me." Colour is one of the most striking features of this

specially prepared environment for the children; the furniture, the cupboards, the walls, the pictures, the little dusters that hang in a row, the materials with which the children are occupied, the children's frocks—all these together combine to form a cheerful and attractive harmony in colour. In fact some of the occupations presented to the children (*e.g.*, the Colour Tablets) are specially designed to develop the child's colour sense. And as if all this were not enough, on the window-sills are flower pots, and on each little table, a vase of flowers.

Most intriguing of all, however, to the visitor to Lilliput are the miniature inhabitants themselves. They look so quaint and charming, so busy and self-contained, and yet so small; so serious and yet at the same time so serene and happy—so natural. The whole room is filled with a quiet hum of orderly activity. Most of the little ones are sitting at the small tables alone or in groups of twos and threes. Some, however, are working on rugs spread out here and there where there is a space on the floor. (Why not? Does the brain work only in a sitting position?) The most astonishing thing about it all is that each of these tiny children is quite free to move about on his own affairs, to consult this tiny colleague or that, to go hither or thither, to replace the material with which he has been working in one of the cupboards, choose another, and return with it to its place—even to choose another place, too, if he so wishes. For all the world one is reminded—by all this bustling activity, this coming and going—of the atmosphere in some large city bank or a great emporium.

Yet business is not the object of all this activity, nor yet pleasure, if by pleasure you mean make-believe or play. No, it is work which is going on here, real concentrated intellectual work! Strange though it may seem, at a dozen little tables (not forgetting the floor also) in a dozen different ways, these serene and joyful scholars—ages 3 to 7 years—are busily and spontaneously laying the foundations of real culture. They are learning to read, to write, to reckon, to write compositions—even to do geometry and grammar.

Yet the scene presents hardly any resemblance to a schoolroom in the ordinary sense of the word. Gone are the heavy desks, gone are the rows of benches, gone, too, is the teacher's desk and high stool. Almost it would seem as if the teacher, too, had gone; for you may quite possibly be in the room some minutes without being aware of her presence. As likely as not she may be down on her knees in a corner of the room showing a child who is working on a rug how to compose words with the moveable script alphabet;

or perhaps explaining to an eager little group how to divide 3,486 by 3 with the wonderful arithmetical material which Dr. Montessori has invented to show the structure of the Decimal System.

We can, in fact, quite truthfully say that the old type of school-mistress has vanished along with the old type of schoolroom in which she reigned with such absolute sovereignty. She has been metamorphosed from a domineering "school-ma'am" into something resembling a cross between an information bureau and a guardian angel. She *directs* now more than she teaches—directs the exuberant and inexhaustible energies of childhood into creative channels. Like an experienced guide she points out the way the children must go; but they must walk on their own feet, and much prefer it. She is always at hand ready to come to their assistance the moment they need it, but she does not overwhelm them with the superior strength of her adult personality. Rather she is like the sun—the great encourager—in whose genial and stimulating presence the tender and delicate buds of the children's opening intellects expand and grow by the exercise of their own mysterious and God-given powers.

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POINTS ABOUT MONTESSORI.

1. It is based on years of patient observation of child nature by the greatest educational genius since Froebel.
2. It has proved itself of universal application. Within a single generation it has been tried with complete success with children of every civilised nation under the sun. Race, colour, climate, nationality, social rank, type of civilisation—all these make no difference to its successful application.
3. It has revealed the small child as a lover of work, intellectual work, spontaneously chosen and carried out with profound joy.
4. It is based on the child's imperious need to "learn by doing." At each stage in the child's mental growth corresponding occupations are given by means of which it develops its opening faculties.
5. While it offers the child a maximum of spontaneity it nevertheless enables it to reach the same or even a higher level of scholastic attainment than under the old systems.

6. Though it does away with the necessity of coercion, by means of rewards and punishments, it achieves a higher form of discipline than formerly; because it is an "active discipline," one which takes its origin from within the child and not from without.

7. It is based on a profound respect for the personality of the child, from whom it removes the preponderating influence of the adult, thus leaving it "room to grow" in biological independence. Hence the child is allowed a large measure of liberty (not licence), which forms the basis of real discipline.

8. It enables the teacher to deal with each child individually in each subject, and thus guide it according to its individual requirements.

9. Each child works at its own pace. Hence the quick child is not held back by the slow, nor is the latter, in trying to keep up with the former, obliged to flounder along hopelessly out of its depth. Each stone in the mental edifice is "well and truly laid" before the next is added.

10. It does away with the competitive spirit and its train of baneful results. More than this, at every turn it presents endless opportunities amongst the children for mutual help—which is joyfully given and gratefully received.

11. Since the child works from its own free choice, without competition and coercion, it is freed from the dangers of overstrain, feeling of inferiority, and other such experiences which are apt to be the unconscious cause of profound mental disturbances in later life.

12. Finally, the Montessori Method develops the whole personality of the child, not merely its intellectual faculties, but also its powers of deliberation, initiative, independent choice, with their emotional complements. And by living, as a free member of a real social community, the child practises those fundamental social qualities which form the basis of good citizenship.

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THE CHILD AND THE CHURCH

Notes on Doctor Montessori

by

MORTIMOR STANDING

THE CHILD AND THE CHURCH

I first met Doctor Maria Montessori in 1921 on my way to India. I was anxious to meet her for several reasons - not only because I admired her as an educationalist but also because she was a Catholic. It will be interesting, I thought, to meet someone who is a Catholic and at the same time an original and scientific thinker for "God forgive me" this was a convention which I imagined at that time to be a contradiction in terms.

(See article from the Morning Post).

As it came about that we had not been acquainted for more than a quarter of an hour, in that little room in the "House of the Angels" in Barcelona before discussing the Doctrine of Original Sin, having worked for three years in the atmosphere of the Biological Department of a modern English University, I had come, like everyone else I met there, to think of the story of Adam and Eve and the Fall as an exploded superstition.

Madame Montessori did not seem in the least bit surprised or shocked at my point of view. Though it was over thirty years ago I can still remember some of the arguments she used at that time. "There is nothing impossible," she said, "in the idea of a defect being passed on from generation to generation. In Medical Science it has been known that certain imperfections have been handed down from family to family for

up to three hundred years". Another argument I recall is this " It is easier to fall from a height than to regain it. It is easier for a man to fall off a roof than to get back on to it, just as it was easier for Adam to fall from grace than to regain his supernatural eminence. ~~As a Quaker I did not believe in Baptism, and roundly criticized what seemed to me then the heartless teaching of the Church with regard to the fate of unbaptized babies.~~

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Looking back on it I now realize that Montessori's reply to my criticism was a very broad and wise one. She said "the more you get to know and the more you will get to know about the Catholic Church the more you will get to know about the Catholic Church, the more clearly you will see that her whole aim, as well as her practice, was that - far from wishing to retain the effect of sin - does just the opposite, through the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist and the Indulgences, in fact all sorts she labours incessantly, to get rid of sin and its effects. Another point I may at that time be bringing up against the Church was what I was pleased to describe as the almost hypnotic power of the Priests over the Laity. Madame Montessori, with one of her gracious smiles replied that actually in Catholic worship it was exactly the reverse. The office of the Priests in the Mass - Centre of Catholic worship-

NOTE: Actually the Church has never dogmatically defined the usual teaching that such infants go to Limbo.
 See articles by _____ in the Down Side Review.

was quite an impersonal one. One does not as a rule think of the personality of the Priest at all during the celebration of Mass: it is not ~~him~~ himself as a person who matters so much, as his office. It is in fact just the opposite in most Protestant forms of worship, for there the personality of the Parson is of great importance (the Catholics never ask each other, - "Did you have a nice Mass? in the way that Protestants often ask each other" Did you have a nice service"?)

At that time there was staying with Doctor Montessori as her constant companion, secretary and interpreter, an American Society Lady "Miss Adelia Pyle". She attended Doctor Montessori's first training course for teachers in Rome, and not long after that entered the Catholic Church. There was thus the first of a long line of "Montessori Converts" in many countries, i.e. there were people who had first become interested in the Montessori system of education, and had subsequently been received into the Church. Miss Pyle who was present at our conversation, though she did not make any attempt to join in the argument, but at the end of it she remarked "You shouldn't stand shivering and arguing on the brink, you should just make up your mind and jump in as I did. " This question of Baptism never worried me", she continued, "I am quite sure" she went on, "that even if there was some heathen living in Tibet, even if he was a sunworshipper, but was really a good fellow, and

Montesson on
Religious Ed

Cambridge

(Copy Carbon)

I wish that all these efforts would penetrate the Liturgy at an early age. Try to explain it directly. So with Doctrine. Try to make it understood in the same way as other subjects.

SAME AS OTHER SUBJECTS.

Don't make a distinction.-

Further if don't pass examination - a year lost.

The aim is that Religious instruction should be given.

Now what I suggest is a sort of hersey!^e

Religion should be a part of life and not compared with a subject for instruction.

The difference.

There is a difference which should be explained. We would have Religion taught in such a way that it forms a religious man and not one who has received an intellectual instruction.

This is the basis of all Reform in Religious Education.

This idea leads to making us admit the

1. importance of the Personality of the Child,
2. And therefore to use the Psychology of the Church to help it walk in the path of Religious Education.

THE DIFFERENCE IS SHOWN IN THE GOSPEL.

This difference to which I allude can be illustrated by referring to the words in the Gospel. So well known to all - Catholic Protestants and others alike.

Cambridge Aug. 1st

The question of Religious Education is full of interesting problems. People are seeking many methods to render Religious Education more efficacious - Experiments in various directions.

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SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME

It is generally taken in another sense "Lead the little children to me" And all do this - leading the children by various methods and with much good will. But actually in the Scriptures the words convey a different meaning. Permit the little children to come to me (Lasciate venire)

This would mean to say that the Adult could be an obstacle when he tries to lead. In fact in what different ^{ways} the adult and children come to Church. The adults come (with) kneeling kissing the hem of His garment --- this signifies simplicity and love.

The difference then is not in the matter of the Teaching but in the attitude of the Teacher.

The educator who wishes to conduct the Church assumes an absolute role - ~~xx~~ in a state of pride - as though to say "I am the person who must do everything."

Instead it was God who came to do things for the little children. The adult in this case, as it were substitutes himself for God - i.e. he has Pride instead of the virtue necessary - humility. ^u ^{if} Himily claims that there is something which God does in the Church - that there exists something already in the Church something which is beautiful and like precious silver. Our Lady herself has defended the Church from the adults.

There exists then something different in the child. We have another form of religion - not necessary of more value. He

"He that is greatest of all He became a little Child"- So the Church has something she can teach us.

NOT ABANDONMENT

Some adults might conclude. "Very well, then we won't teach the child anything. Let him! come to God himself."

But this is a great evident error.

This principle - Ledau Audore (Let the Church come) bears within itself an aid and a guide for us. It is this fact of helping a child who has a principle of activity in himself. - Here we find not only the Basis of Religious Education but of All Education.

This is expressed in Our Method by the Great Principle

1. Help me to help myself.
2. How can we help the Child to do things alone.
3. How can we find those limits of help beyond which we become an obstacle.

To find these limits is a problem difficult but

Education represents a Collaboration of these two Beings - the Adult and the Child.

Only the child who works by himself - independently, works, in truth, on to the Path of Development in every sense he must

work by himself

with help

(How like the way God ~~n~~ treats us in the Spiritual Life!)

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NECESSITY OF A PREPARED ENVIRONMENT

We repeat the Child left to himself in a grown up world for adults could not do anything.

The Child is different from us and so he must have a different environment - and we must create that environment for him

This is the first step and all our Method is founded upon this.

This is so Fundamental it would take too long to go into it - So we limit ourselves to giving an idea of the kind of Environment we would have for Religious Education.

A Religious Environment in which he can act according to the laws of his own inner construction. And in the Environment we shall see how the Church develops; how long he takes, what is the Rhythm of His Life.

THE ATRIUM

This environment which never thought of many years ago and worked out with the help of a young Priest.

It is not a Chapel. It is a room specially devoted to Religious Education.

We have called this room The Atrium - which could be compared to the Ante-Room of a Church. But it could exist without a Church being near. And just as in a school you have a room for music, gymnastics, manual works etc. So you can have one for teaching Religion. If we do have rooms for various subjects how much more ought we to have one for Religion.

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A ROOM FOR SPECIAL BEAUTY.

Though this room is not a Church it should be one of special Beauty, with beautiful lights, objects, forms, objects and so forth. Everything of the best.

A PARALLEL WITH OUR SCHOOL.

The first time we worked out ^h his prayer we discovered or saw a great parallel between our ordinary Montessori School and the Atrium.

You must know that in our schools the Life in the Casa del Bonteni is ^{based} found in the small child's characteristics. And the most ^{interesting} astonishing and significant ^{thing} is that the small child has the power to absorb what is ^h on his environment. This Absorbent Mind is characteristic of little Children. They just take without judging. And what he takes becomes a part of himself.

Something which enriches his psychic life

It makes one realize that the child should be in a position to take from the environment that which makes him grow.

This fact is very important and very impressive and should be taken into consideration because at this stage in which the Child takes from his Environment to construct himself - he has a power which later becomes lost.

This is Our Doctrine of Sensitive Periods the result of 30 years observation and experience with children.

Sensitivities

The child has special sensitivities which lead him to take certain elements from the environment, and taking - to transform himself. It is a creative work, the work of Self Creation.

AN EXAMPLE: LANGUAGE.

The child takes in language — Environment without a teacher. But not only is he able to take in thousands but he transforms his vocal organs so as to reproduce them exactly. No adult can do it as well. There we come to possess our language which is our 'Mother Tongue'.

The adult can learn a language with rules and efforts - but it is always with an effort. (Sforza)

THE WORLD BECOMES FLESH

The other day I saw a work of art and underneath was written 'The Word Became Flesh'. I took these words in a material way.- That is what happens in every child 'The word becomes Flesh.'

So the child masters this language in a way peculiar to childhood. -

- He takes,
- constructs,
- makes himself grow to a man,
- without effort infatigue,

The Child it is who provides this creation, *merely by living.*

So what the Child takes Does "become Flesh," because

In the ordinary Montessori school the child learns to distinguish by touch various stuffs of different textures. Similarly in the Atrium there would be two collections of stuffs. These would be the stuffs out of which the liturgical vestments are made.

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Language becomes incarnated in him.

→ This is a matter of Supreme Importance!

It is the Period of the Absorbent Mind.

Hence we see how essential it is that Religious Education should begin very early, -)

In this period of the Absorbent Mind, and this Religion should be offered to this child,)

) - who takes, who absorbs

SO TO RETURN TO THE ATRIUM.

So it would be possible at this stage to put the Little Child in contact with: -

in the Atrium

- (a) The Liturgical Year
- (b) The Mass

But in such a way that the Child lives and acts, For His way of living at this time is To Act To Do (agirce)

So we must give something which permits or leads to action, as in the ordinary Montessori school. Comparison with ordinary School. - The Stuffs

LITURGICAL STUFFS COLOURS

There would be in the Atrium ~~Two Collections of Stuffs.~~

There are two different grades or qualities, one ^{grade for} of each set.

Thus for Christmas and Easter There are stuffs of a special lustre, for Easter and Christmas. These two ~~stuffs~~ ^{sets} could be compared and sorted;

with ^{that} ~~this~~ ^{which} exactness is so important at this stage.

LITURGICAL COLOURS ON THE WALLS

We could have large strips of stuffs of the liturgical
~~Hanging on the walls in strips~~ colours hanging on the wall,
 One set longer - for Easter and another
 shorter - for Christmas,

LITURGICAL FLOWERS

If there is a garden flowers which have the
 These could be cultivated ~~flowers of the various~~ Liturgical
 Colours, - white, red, green, and little vases ^{similarly coloured.} ditto. and
 There could be also a Liturgical Table, ^{spread out} and every day the Teacher ^{first} and later the
 children, ^{put} on the table a cloth of the Liturgical colour
 of the day, and period of the year.

Children, living in this environment, ^{would up} grow accustomed
 to this fact of the liturgical colours. Not a great deal ^{would be}
 said ^{about it, but rather it is a thing done and seen.} - a thing done and seen. So you would get a sort of
 general ^{perennial liturgical colour, and against this} colour as a background for the special feasts. ^{other colours} ^{would see most days}

TO GROUPS AS WELL

This fact that children learn and take through activity
 is useful for groups as well. -

And through action-doing comes a more profound realiza-
 tion of what it means (Eg. The Altar is the Table of the Last
 Super)

THE ALTAR IS THE TABLE OF THE LAST SUPER.

So in the Atrium Children do things just as in the Casa
 del B. they lay - for instance.

Now they should do it in a special way.

1. Put the (Liturgical) ^{stools} Stones round the table -
^{quickly} quickly and evenly spaced.
2. So we have one person and 12 others. They put

themselves round this table - and repeat this action many times.

Then there is this part in which one (J.C.) disappears and also (Judas) dark violet. These remain !!

And in the place of the one who wore red robe is a crucifix and two candles.

One of the ^{chairs} remains near the table - represents St. Peter.

On the table is placed the chalice and paten with

And there remain the 10 others as before with their costumes.

And so we get an Altar (See previous account)

Now this sort of presentation done with very small children will give something which will remain.

Even a child of 3 could do this. Thus the Altar represents a Table Prepared

As was the Last Supper.

1 (Our Lord) and 12 Disciples

One disappears

One is made the Head of All.

So there will be the notions which will remain, and one repeats it many times in the year.

Not only for This but for many Other Things

So we have (a) Preparing an Environment

(b) Allowing them to Act in it.

For Every Instruction Something Similar

(a) Prepared Environment.

(b) Objects selected and suitable (Material)

(c) An Activity.

The important thing is to be able to work a long time freely in this environment.

And all this in early infancy.

CAMBRIDGE LECTURE 11.

As soon as one comes to the fact of giving an Environment (Prepared) for the child suddenly we see certain possibilities:-

- (a) First of all - The Analysis of Difficulties
- (b) The consideration of the Sensitive Periods (and the using of them).

This Analysis of that which is to be taught leads in itself to clearness: because it helps one to distinguish (Always this idea of the intellect as a right which helps to make clear differences which were there before but never were realized. Also one recognises how in many cases one leaves with a long period of exercises; and others "interviso".

This Analysis permits that certain things are able to penetrate into the Child's soul; and one finds a great response. We must recognize the profound needs of the Child's Soul.

History This makes us think of a Past (Passato) which is very distant - History - which has to be considered.

And In this History we hand on the Story of the Church and the great faith of its ministers even to martyrdom.

And if we speak only of the Present Period of History there have also been Saints who were children.

So

Religious Education must seek a living contact with the Child's Soul.

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This is our principle that Education - all education must first assist (suscitare) life.

And we must give the child an environment adapted or suitable to assisting this life.

And this life must develop according to the interior laws which were put in it at its creation.

So we must have the Prepared Environment - but this is not enough. We must also have An adult who understands this environment and the child's needs in relation to it - a guide.

We have discovered - in other species of education - that the secret lies in being able to touch some profound intellectual point. (The Point of Contact)

This is not really different in practice - in fact it is easy. It is sufficient not to be in too much anxiety to learn a great number of things, and learn them quickly.

We must give time for this process to improve. It is enough to have a ~~int~~ good sense, and to analyse things in a simple way.

For Example Instruction in or outside the Church.

The usual method of bringing children into contact with the liturgy is to take them into the Church. Then say "Now keep still". "Don't make a move. And so the Teacher takes them into the Church - pushes them about. Genuflect (down you go!) Sign of the Cross - The Drill Sergeant method. And in the Church "Look children! - now he is doing this; now that!" And now it is finished and we all go out together

> In the Moral Order - Order of apostles.

... just as a happy singer making others
enjoy the harmonies contained in his singing".

The Logos - The Eternal Word is not divided
He is unique and absolutely simple. In Him the
Father intelligently embraces -
in one glance.

His own Intellect + all possible Worlds -

All natures and all supernatural gifts conceivable.

He sees (the Father's Intellect) in the Word

The final answer to the problems that philosophy
+ theology do not even succeed in posing.

In this Unique Word the F. Intelligenter

Knows the Universe in the least details

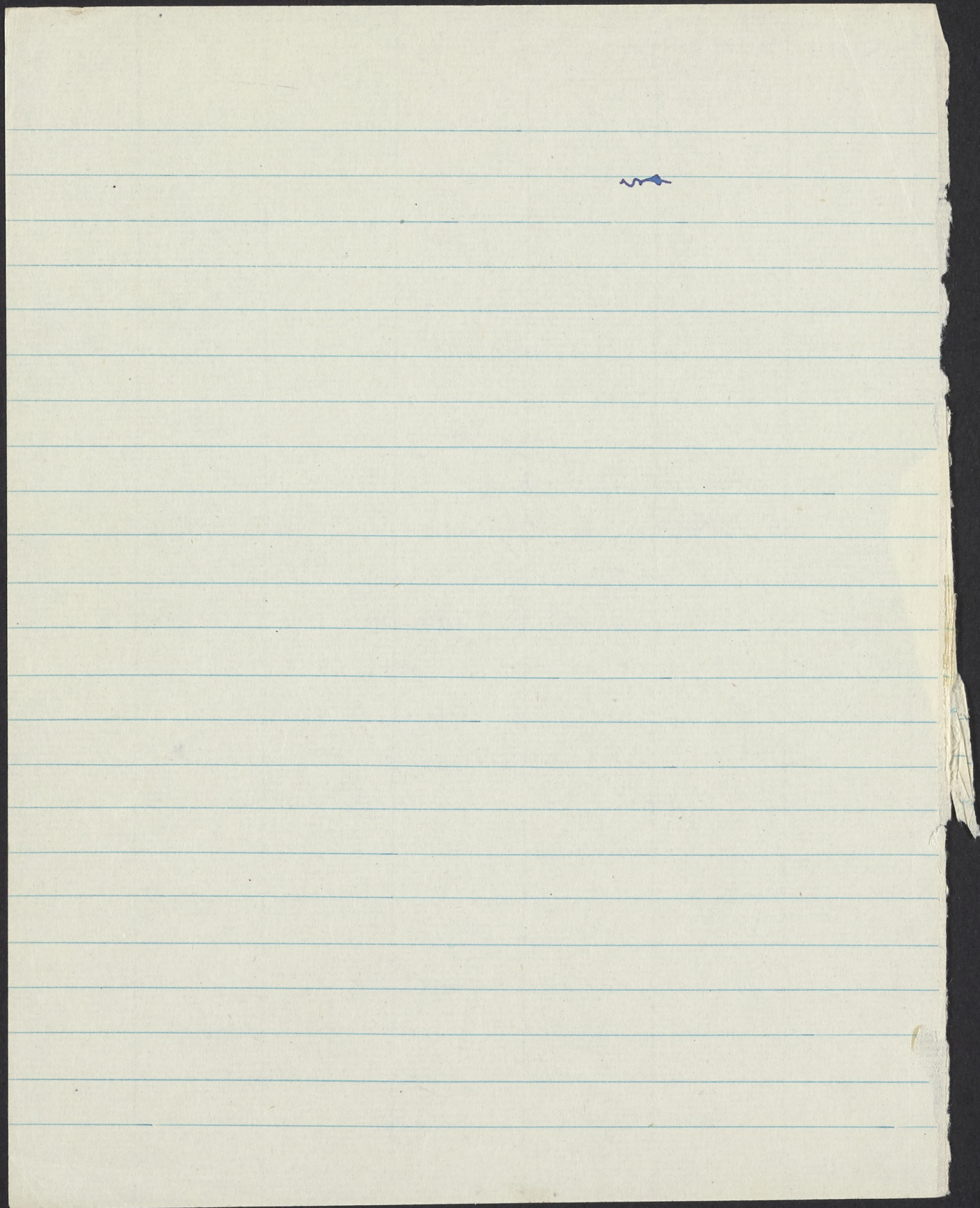
And our poor Selves even to the most delicate shades
of physique, intellect, + moral temperament.

Believes the ultimate mysteries as yet
hidden from the blessed.

Our predestination + escort no of the elect.

The universal infinite Being + the unlimited number
of our acts wh. will be realized in eternity

All these truths the Intellect embraces in
a single glance.



The more unity a thing has to more perfect
is its goodness & power.

The higher a nature is to more closely
related to it is what emanates
from it. (The hidden know)

Everything imperfect strives after perfection?

The higher to rank a thing holds us to
universe to more it ought to participate
in that order in which to goodness
of to universe. connects.

The more perfect a thing is in power
and

The greater degree of goodness it possesses,
to more universal is its striving after
goodness — and —

to more ~~distance~~ it seeks and
accomplishes good in that which
is distant from it.

like a flock of sheep. Bang! And now we all genuflect!
Bang! and now we turn round and walk out" on crocodile."

It is impossible by such a method to arouse the Religious
sentiment within a child. It is True - Certain Formalities
are necessary.

The children must walk in and keep silence. Make the
sign of the Cross - Genuflect - Light candles.

The Great Principle

Now it is only reasonable when you come to think of it
that there should be a previous preparation in these actions.
They can and should be done - and perfected - apart from actual
Religious Services.

Also the Perfection of these actions should be accompanied
by a certain repose and equilibrium of Spirit.

L'Education Motrice.

And so we get one of the most important items in the
Atrium. The Education of Movement. It is enough to begin this
and then we realize that the children have had need of a long
period of exercises. And also it is important that the perfec-
ting of these actions should be accompanied by a certain repose
equilibrium of spirit.

In the Ordinary Catechism something similar.

We do something of this sort in our ordinary Montessori
Schools - though they have not any such aim of preparing the
child definitely for his life in the Church; but rather with
the aim that the child in general should have a control over

his own movements.

And this Discipline we have found has brought about a singularly good apt preparation for intellectual things - And that - A Spontaneous Discipline carries into being without our making direct efforts to attain it.

Eg. THE SILENCE GAME.

We have, for example, a Lesson in Silence (The Silence Game) Its main object is just - "to make Silence" - it is a science. And it brings with it the necessity of a complex preparation. To be silent does not simply mean To stop talking, but it means to establish that thing so rare in this world - Silence. This Absolute Silence is bound up with this fact - that all movements are inhibited. We make the Silence collectively.

So 1. All voluntary Movements inhibited

2. Then we feel we "enter into the Silence".

This is an exercise for children of 4 and 5 years of age, and even 3 or 2½.

There is then a certain correspondence between the state of a child's soul and the possibility of making silence. Children who have understood this silence and how it is made and kept walk quietly - by themselves. It is something which comes from within, something intimately related to the spirit of childhood and not the result of an external discipline.

It is an interesting and a strange thing that children will do many things with a great interest (at this stage) which are just special movements.

Something practical.

So in this Novitiate the child will perform many practical exercises and duties, which are not directly related to the life of the spirit. So in the Atrium - this special place - it would at this age be possible to teach all these movements - sign of the Cross, Genuflect (in two ways) sitting, still, standing up, walking to Holy Communion - Lighting Candles etc.

THE AIM.

The important thing to aim at in all this - is the fact that children go into the Church knowing all these things beforehand.

THE CHILD DOES NOT LIKE TO BE TOUCHED.

It may seem a small matter, but is well worth noting that Children do not like being touched or pushed about.

When we give a command to the Church we should not psysically touch him - push him there, pull him here.

We should not touch the child but guide him and always let him do his own maximum.

One thing pleases him abve all - it is to know how to do things himself in the Church (and elsewhere).

We must set this child free from the adult who pushes and pulls him!

ANALYSIS APPLIED TO PRAYER AND DOCTRINE.

We teach children prayers whole and entire. Perhaps the Church - especially in a certain age - can respond to one part of a prayer and not the other. And perhaps it has an attitude of spirit which has need of one sort of prayer and not another.

Example for Illustration.

There was a child of 1½ years which had often heard the prayer "Hail Mary". But once I said to it just the first part Ave Maria Plena Gratia. Hail Mary full of grace. Just this phrase instead of the whole. And the child was enchanted full of enthusiasm. How beautiful - quanto bella! I will say that to my Mummy when I go home! Dio Ti saluto - God be with you.

So - by giving the whole prayer "en bloc" we may miss this response to a prayer which answers a need.

The Prayer of Protection.

Sometimes we teach a prayer of protection to children asking for God's protection on "Father and Mother and Me" etc.

Now if we let the child do it freely and spontaneously he will do it in a different way.

God bless Daddy and Mummy and John and Martha and "the dog and the cat." We see that the spirit of this ~~utter~~ little child needs to embrace everyone - won't forget anyone even the pets. So we get this "long story" (lunga storia!) so characteristic of the infantile soul.

The Child is moved, and carried away by this prayer.

We can see that he is led (portato) to

1. Seek protection -
2. and also to be himself the Centre.

So he has this idea of God who looks after him and his family - Such a prayer fulfils a need of his soul.

Also he is apt too at this time to respond to the idea that he has a Guardian Angel all to himself.

It all clustres round the family ("an insieme familiare")

LOVE IS A PRAYER OF SALUTATION.

Though the idea of a guardian angel is common to all stages it is particularly suited to the small child. It is the same with a Prayer of Salutation. The small child has a special sensitivity to such a prayer.

THE SEVEN YEAR OLD CHANGES HIS NEEDS.

When the child gets to seven years he begins a new way of conceiving things. The Pre-occupation of the Seven-Year-Old is quite different. He wants to know the causes of things.

His reason has developed and with it his Conscience.

Now he wants to know what is right and wrong.

This pre-occupation of ~~his~~ discerning and wanting to distinguish between Good and Evil is related to his spiritual life and its special needs at that age.

His need is different from that of the Little Child who seeks and needs Protection (Security)

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His Prayer could be "Help me to distinguish between the Right and Wrong." In the Our Father the phrase "Give us this day Our Daily Bread" is suited to the need of the small child which much more than "Forgive us our sin as we forgive them that sin against us."

THE ADOLESCENT.

The Part which says "Thy Kingdom Come" - is more suited to the Adolescent. So we see that at each epoch there is a special sensitivity.

TO SUGGEST A CORRESPONDENCE.

We could know a material made in which there were separated the different parts of prayer - analysed so that the child can choose the part he likes.

Some prayers - for instance - represent a Salutation. And you could try and develop this idea - and so according to needs of each age.

We could imitate the little child into these salutations to Our Lord and His Mother. And "present" these salutations.

TO RETURN TO THE SEVEN YEAR OLD

One of the most evident results of is that we have found in the children from 7 - 12 years - this susceptibility to distinctions of Good and Evil and interest in Causes.

It is felt as a real relief (Neil!) to understand these things at this stage.

He sees in Our Lord's life at this stage The Perfect

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Model - The Control of Error.

CONFESSION.

This is the stage at which the child is prepared for Confession. This Preparation could be aided by staying on in this Environment - Since children will do all sorts of things at this stage that others do and teachers think it is merely tale-telling. But it is deeper than this: it is the genuine longing to know if these things are right or wrong. So we get this Principle.

It is not merely a question of Teaching certain things, - but of - Teaching so as to correspond with the needs of each epoch and Sensitive Period.

THE SACRAMENTS.

It is of course necessary to teach the child all those special means by which the Church helps us - (i.e. The Sacraments and Sacramentals).

The things Necessary for the Valid Sacrament.

He must know the things which are necessary for the validity of the Sacrament.

In this way we establish the Material Some things are essential to the Sacrament - some a sort of luxury. So the children make a study along the line of exactitude.

Sometimes the Teacher herself does not know which are the essential things.

Also The Words and Phrases of the Sacraments.

The difficulty lies not in arousing interest, or in the matter of instruction but in having the necessary knowledge to present what is essential.

But knowledge is not enough.

We must know the Psychology of the child at various ages.

The Children's Choice.

So we must leave to the Child the possibility of choosing that part of the Teaching which appeals to him - not because he has to know only one part; but because at each stage there is a particular part which appeals to him and therefore teaches him.

Thus the Commandments.

These are not prayers: they are commands. Something not to do - or do. They should be given with solemnity.

If Moses did so with great solemnity - thunder, lightening earthquake, Trumpets etc. - So we too must give the children something impressive.

Not just a phrase - or string of phrases to be learnt by heart.

Animate Religious Instruction.

So we see (1) it is necessary to animate a great deal of the Religious Instruction.

(2) And to do it in such a way that the Teacher responds to, the needs of each age.

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It cannot be done in a school curriculum with 9.30 a.m.
Arithmetic, 10.30 Geography 12 a.m. Religious Instruction.

It is necessary to have a special Environment in which the Religious Life can develop itself (si svolge) remembering The Child is a human being with the dignity of a human being - and - That this Religious Life develops by means of (a traverse) Activity.

The Inner Creative force is stronger than we usually think -

The Teacher must seek to endeavour to arrange things so that the child passes all his life in Religious Activity.

Going from difficulty to difficulty overcoming them - by ever new means for Religious Activity.

THE ADOLESCENT.

As the child at 7 has need to understand the Causes and the reasons of things - the adolescent has need of a satisfaction of a feeling of unification. -

unification with the whole world. He therefore has need of the Great Liturgical Ceremonies. He feels too the need of Meditation. So as to - Realize his mission in life.

(cf St. Ignatius The Two Kingdoms on his Spiritual Exercises.)

So we see all through Religious Education these different lines or directions or emphasis of Spirit.

Man must be urged on even to the highest.

Arrested Development in the Spiritual Life.

Some people even adults never seem to get beyond the prayers of infancy - (Prolezini)

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Not that they don't always remain - in part - but they must be superseded. -

Others Remain at the Stage of the 7 year old.

Always asking "Is it right" These are the scrupulous This must also be superseded. There a comes the moment when he loves the Great Liturgical ceremonies - thinks of the nation as a whole. He is interested in this "Great Group". This is so with the adolescent - but this must also be superseded - beyond the nation - he must meditate on his relation to humanity, to God.

His Cosmic Mission.

This meditation makes him feel the responsibility of choosing his mission. The great for the future. Like the Exercises of St. Ignatius. "Choose between the Two Flags" He becomes one Prepared to Fight.

Feels himself ready to do anything - do all. The last stage - to become a Missionary, with a sense of responsibility. But this Enthusiasm must begin at the earliest years.

Montessori Lectures

on

Religion

~~Cambridge~~

~~Assumption~~

Assumption

(~~Carbon 2~~)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

Our contribution is the practical aspect - i.e. how to transmit the Teaching of the Church. Always we have the same Principle.

First Based on the Psychology of the Child

Second This idea that the Child is an essere spontaneo and can take from the Environment much more than we had imagined. So there comes at once this idea that even with small children we must prepare la parte piu alla - the highest part - and after some time put the child in a Prepared Environment.

So the Great Question Is - not how we are to teach religion but - How to put the child in such a condition that he can take in for himself. - For the child living in an environment takes in. So the Answer to the Problem is -

To Prepare an Environment on such a basis that it is possible for him to take in, absorb spontaneously.

Takes in Through Activity.

There are many things to consider in religion but we shall not deal with the most intimate i.e. the philosophical side (theological). That is not for me. I do not intend to enter into the instructional part but to suggest a contribution to the External part of the Catholic Religion.

The External Part More formal more external.

There are many things to consider in religion but we shall not deal with the most intimate i.e. It has a great function this external part and it is an aspect which lends

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itself to the preparation of a Special Environment and -
The Liturgy.

THE LITURGICAL MOVEMENT.

Many persons had occupied themselves with this aspect. And we in Barcelona occupied ourself in this matter - this more liturgical part - and thought of building a church for the children - as others had also thought. But afterwards came this other idea.

A PREPARATION FOR THE CHURCH.

In fact there should be a preparation for what the child has to learn and take in in the Church. A Confusion. We must not confuse this Preparation for worship with the idea of worship itself.

Some had this other idea to prepare for the life in the Church in a place specially set apart. So - To prepare a child in this way is to prepare a special environment. This special environment would be as it were an Ante Camera to the Church - an ante-room in which one gets ready.

When we go into Church we need to be prepared. But this Preparation is a long affair and different from the application in the Church.

THE ATRIUM

This ante - camera we call the Atrium. The name Atrium was given to the large ingresso (entrance) to the Roman Basilica. There however the idea is systematical.

The Atrium is therefore an Ante-Camera to the Church

in which the child is left perfectly free (because it is not the Church)

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ATRIUM

It must be Bella (beautiful) more simple than the Church, and not as beautiful. Pero abbastanza grande - but sufficiently grandiose.

It is astonishing thing that this idea has not come up before. For we have special rooms for music, gymnastics, chemistry and so forth.

It seems to us natural to have separate rooms for music - and of course you could if absolutely necessary use the same room for music and gymnastics but the Principle is a Special room for a special subject.

Thus a Special Room for Religious Training.

A Practical Advantage in a school where you have Catholic and Non-Catholic Children (who are understood not to have Cath. Teaching)

- While at the same time it would give a general religious atmosphere to all the children. The Atrium is not to be abandoned a place where children sit and receive religious instruction - at least not that primarily.

It is a place where they would have the

- 1. possibility of doing certain things.
- 2. Of living there in tranquility.

3. Where acting and through activity they could acquire certain cognitions at the same Time.

Our ordinary Montessori Schools seem like a preparation - a prepared environment of - motor activities, by means of which certain cognitions are made - So -

THE ATRIUM. would be a specialization of the same principle as the Casa del B. - a specialization of the same things, too, under a special subject.

Example The Liturgical Colours.

In our ordinary class rooms we have all the colours given to the child - a real study of all the colours. But in the Atrium would be only certain selected colours. In fact we would choose just the Liturgical Colours.

Liturgical Colours.

So in the Atrium we have another set of colours Red, Green, white, Purple, Black etc. And give a symbolic meaning to them Thus Xmas is white and Easter most white with a sort of lustre in it.

So we give the stuffs in 2 goods and he can make and them. ?

It is a specialization of Exercises which he has already done. They do not need an explanation at first. Just that these colours penetrate into their minds by seeing and touching them.

PASQUALE

Not only white - but violet with a prevalenza of blue, and then more obscure till it becomes a dark violet.

The material is different - not satin wool more coarse and more rough. The white of Easter - thick velvet - Green is used also, thick, rough, lines you can feel its hardness - Adult Life. The little hands have a different impression
Satin - Rough.

Thus we give Sensational Impressions.

Similar to the other ones in Casa de B. But here we enter a new field.

We must also give the true Liturgical Colours. They should also hang from the wall. Long on the outside - Short on the other (Pascal) (Natal)

These should be a succession of these colours making an artistic whole "An insieme artistico" simple - "like stilo nuero centro".

Liturgical Furniture - Table.

There should be a special table in the room - (at the side or in the centre) And vases of different colours (liturgical) And a special table-cloth of the liturgical colour of the day - In the vases, too, they can put flowers with the special colour of the day.

"So the child would see day after day the same colour - and then suddenly the colour changes to one quite different. So he becomes acquainted with the idea of the Changing Liturgical Colours.

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READING COMES INTO IT

This could be joined to school work. It is our custom to put name-cards to objects - So we could have the names of the Liturgical Seasons - Advent, Christmas, and the names of Special Liturgical days.

SYMBOLICAL PICTURES.

We could also have symbolical pictures corresponding to the Liturgical Events - Xmas, Easter Pentecost, Assumption etc. So from the beginning the Child would find a division of time against a constant background. And in this way even a child of 3½ - 4 can enter into the Liturgical Year - but in a sensonal way.

KEYS TO THE UNIVERSE

And as happens in our ordinary schools these definite and ordered impressions in the sensonal sphere become as keys to the Universe unlocking after discoveries and cognitions. So here,

The child goes home and hears his parents talking of such things as Lent, and Epiphany and he finds in his experience something clear and precise which helps him.

OTHER OBJECTS IN THE ATRIUM.

There should be Pictures and Statues - specially suited to impress the child -

Eg. Bambino Jesus with Madonna.

These should be always there - whatever the changes of the

year - Thus a teaching with objects which change takes place on a back ground which never changes.

This teaching would be given in a light (legere) and calm and peaceful way - like the Seasons of Nature - against this fixed place "piano fixo" constant back ground.

A PARALLEL (another) ATRIUM AND C. S. DEL B.

In every C. del B. there is always a basin with water for washing hands. So in the Atrium would also be a basin with water - a holy water stand. It is not for washing hands but the hand touches it. But how does it touch?

So here we get a Teaching, a Teaching of Movement. How to make the sign of the Cross.

confealenza with exactitude

Always a child of three - four years is interested in doing a thing with exactitude and precision. Indeed for so exact that they ask us for details we have forgotten - thus "Do we touch here or here on the head?"

PARABLE OF THE MISER.

He is a miser for exactitude. The miser wants everything even to the last farthing. He won't leave anything behind - So with regard to the exact movements. This is the moment to teach these things for the Child wishes to be exact - not so than a master of ceremonies!!

So we have this Sensonal - motor Education. You can call it religion: it is the external part (cf. Social Contacts at this stage - external!) It is all symbolic and forms part of the life of the soul.

THE LITURGY.

"The Church is a Society which has fixed certain movements and words and this precision is not caprice. It is something corresponding to the spiritual life. Eg. Sign of the Cross.

ANOTHER PARALLEL TO EX. OF P.L. SILENCE GAME.

Now in the Atrium there are certain movements to be learned by heart. They are not gymnastics. Nor - like Ex. of P. Life - simply. To move without noise or Pour water without spelling etc. These are movements which belong to ordinary Social Life.

But there we have a different thing. The liturgical words and actions - are said and done in a special way and with great significance. Everything has a profound significance. Therefore we must prepare these actions with great precision - con esatezza.

So we start with this idea of Something Sacred - They are actions like the others but with a different tone, a different inner Sentiment. Respectfully, reverently - all this because they belong to the life of the soul.

So too with words, speech not with a loud voice, but quiet subdued.

Silence Game

This has prepared hi. An ex. of silence for control of movement. A child of $2\frac{1}{2}$ can do it.

But here the Silence has a different meaning. In the School through the silence we listen to the little of the world - birds, dog, cat etc. and the g voice of the T. who calls.

But here it is not the T. who calls Mary! It is as it were the voice of God who is calling Mary.

The Silence is different from the silence of the world - It is the difference between the silence of an exterior world and the silence of the inner world of the spirit.

EDUCATION - THE VOICE IN ATRIUM.

The child learns all sorts of songs - et. for a birthday party; nursery rhymes etc. and for all occasions - parties etc.

But here it is a special sort of singing - an "Canto Madulato" with few notes something like the Greogorian Chants. One can see the letters of the alphabet - notes - higher and lower - a sensonal - motor eg. again.

PREPARATION FOR BUT NOT IN THE CHURCH

In this way we shall prepare the child to take part in Church worship before he goes. We do not approve of waiting until it is necessary to give this instruction in the Church as many do. Thus we see the Teacher (after a good Nun!) leading a regiment of children all together and giving such commands (like a drill sergeant) sit still or "Dip your hand in the holy water" or You must genuflect (and keeping them with a good push on the shoulder!) This does not help devotion. You cannot expect a child so treated in church to enjoy the same state of soul as one who is left free in the Church because he knows what to do.

BEGIN YOUNG

(In this way we would therefore begin this training very young 2 - 4 years. People don't usually think of doing so at this stage; but it would be a good thing if we acted in this manner the child would have learnt much by the age of 4½ yrs.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (contd.) 11 (Assumption Convent)

General Principles.

Generally speaking in Religious Education we do not take suffering into account - the Psychology of the Child.

1. S.P. We must place as the basis of all instruction the fact that a child can understand different things at different ages.
2. In these various ages are various dispositions - Sensitive Periods - which give the children special interests

in certain matters in the environment.

3. That - for example - there is an age when a matter can be taken in "as a whole" (tutto in un insieme), whereas at another age it will absorb the details.

4. Again there are epochs in the child's life when it wishes to touch and see - must have things in the concrete; and other ages when it has a similar natural tendency to go into the abstract.

5. And - also - THE COMMON BASIS in that The child always takes or absorbs through its own activity.

"what remains is what we take"

MOVEMENT - MOTOEUDOSI

True enough this "attivita" materiale" - this material, activity seems far away from us adults (trappe lontano di noi) but in very truth the child learns by and through movement.

Il Bambino impara Merendoci, Facendo le cose stesse - Doing things himself - they remain.

THE BEGINNING - NOT WITH ABSTRACT IDEAS

Beginning at this early age we cannot start with Abstract ideas. It is not a question of giving more easy do more difficult things but of giving them in a certain way. If we follow this principle we shall discover the surprising fact that the small child can learn much more than we thought and also can feel things more too.

It is not a question then of teaching more easy things but of a more efficacious mode of teaching.

These principles hold for all branches of Religious Instruction.

Examples - let us take (1) Prayer (2) Doctrine.

PRAYER

At what age should B. learn Prayer and Doctrine. Usual mode.

People say child should learn certain things by heart to remember and use them when he is grown up. But in every prayer there are 2 parts (1) which can be comprehended by children. (2) Part beyond their comprehension.

So the Problem stands: Is it necessary to teach the whole prayer even if he does not understand it or that part which he understands.

Example from Experience.

Many years ago I was with a baby of 18 months. We were in the country and the Angelus sounded. So I thought we would say the Hail Mary. I said "Listen to the Bells and listen to my words. And I said - Hail Mary full of Grace Dio ti salvi Maria (there was a pause) Come bella! how beautiful said the Child say it again. Dio ti saluto mia madre! - Teach it to me for something to say to my mummy as a compliment to her.

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So we give one sentence only one day + And another day another sentence "Il Dio Sei con Te" (The Lord be with you)

So we have just one thing - this picture of the Mother of God and it made a deep impression.

Another day, "Tu sei benedetta tra tutte le donne" Blessed art Thou amongst women. How sweet! Come si penetra l'anima of the 2 year old. So we should give these sentences separate from one another. Also this idea that the child should repeat it to his mother (?)

THE MADONNA IN THE ATRIUM.

So you could have in the Atrium a statue of this gracious figure and the child could repeat each day a phrase. One day one phrase. Another day another phrase.

So these phrases would sink in separately into the child's soul and it would rejoice in them.

So it would be seen that this salute is really a salute - a greeting - but the second part Holy Mary Mother of God is not accessible.

So we give the little one the part it can receive. The important thing is to make prayer penetrate into the soul of the little child so that it brings a joy into the soul. So we must give these prayers "Piccolo! Peccole". So there arises something in his soul spontaneous which he desires to repeat - It is a form of ejaculatory Prayers."

This breaking up of prayers into separate ejaculatory prayers is an application of our principle of Isolation of Difficulties.

Give each separately - and with joy.

DOCTRINE

So too with Doctrine - Eg. Commandments. Some persons give these at one age, others at another. Also the manner of teaching is difficult with a Material.

We have the principle of giving an idea with some sort of material to express the idea. In the Atrium there would be great possibilities of giving such materials - that is precisely what it is for. *Id si possono face.* Then one could make all the things which would help for the teaching of Religion.

We could for instance have The Ten Commandments. Engraven on Stone - as Moses had. This would be in sort a materialization of the Commands of God - and useful in its way - But not as efficacious as it might be. It would be after all only a material thing! But in this case it is not a question of more unless of material. What is important in a Commandment is that it is - a Command!

This is the thing to be made clear! - a command. That other prayer was a solution. It is the child who makes the salute. But now we are dealing with something different. The child must receive a command. And it is important that the Child res

receives this command this word of God - with a certain solemnity; and that he reveres it and obeys. So the points to remember in Teaching the 10 Commandments.

- (a) It is a Command.
- (b) To be received with the attitude of adherence.

PREPARATION OF SOUL.

You could prepare these different attitudes of soul corresponding to the form of instruction.

Just as for the 2 year old we could make this idea of a salutation penetrate separately into the soul of the Child - So now we can give the Commandments one by one.

Now we must remember that historically these 10 Commandments were given with great solemnity on Mount Senai - Clouds, trumpets, Earthquake - with miracles and a great meeting of the peoples etc.

So similarly we might try and present these commandments with solemnity and dignity not to gabble them through - en masse - the parts the child understands all mixed up with the parts he cannot comprehend - all in the same tone of voice. "I am the Law, the God etc.

Now this Command has a great solemnity for the individual who receives it and merits a preparation. The child may have heard it many times - in an off hand way - but to-day he is called to receive it. He is chosen. This is something different from the command of the Teacher, preceded by a "Come to me" or sit down I want to tell you something."

This is the Command of God. -

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So we must give it with a special solemnity. We must have a Special environment Hence the value of the Atrium.

And even here we must do everything in the Atrium to facilitate the giving of this command. As in our ordinary schools when we are going to present some new thing we make a preparation - clear the table - chose a good place etc. brush our hair and after all the preparation - Only a triangle is there!

How much more so should it be now when we wish to present a Command of God. So we ~~ex~~ must prepare the Atrium. (It is a form of Liturgy)

As I said I presume the child has already heard this command but vaguely: his mind is still a choas. In general the Child knows much more than we think he knows. He has heard this thing and that: in his mind in fact, are many things but this list of commandments and prayers etc. might be all in a choas.

So this Atrium would serve:-

- (1) To Fix the things - (fissare)
- (2) To make things clear (chiarire le cose)

Coamos from Choas.

Out of this Choas must come order - a creation must form itself in the mind (cf. colours - a confusion and then the liturgical ones distinguished)

(CREATION) COSMOS FROM CHAOS.

Out of this Chaos must come order - a creation must form itself in the mind (cf. colours - a confusion and then the liturgical ones are distinguished)

CREATION.

(a) First Period of Construction

To Separate things.

Light and darkness

Water earth.

(b) Order

This separation is the basis of order and on this order can grow more order.

So we make a work (opera) in the mind of the child and this work is to distinguish things.

And to distinguish the sense of things.

Eg. Prayer and Command.

And for the small child we must distinguish this in a seasonal way.

And with Dignity.

So in our method - when we are going to teach even the smallest details we do it with solemnity.

Would you like to hear this? How much more so with the Commandments of God, How much more necessary to Prepare the Environment for the child's soul to receive it.

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Thus we have a hard task - differing (a) To prepare the child to have confidence in God and His help. - Prayer.

(b) To prepare soul of Child for Obedience - Command.

THE PRINCIPLE - HOW TO PREPARE THE CHILD'S SOUL.

The way we prepare the Child's soul to make this distinction is by Preparing the Environment.

SO FOR THE COMMANDMENTS - THE VOICE OF LIGHT

A darkened room - stillness - curtains drawn. - Then a Glass with light, words in light. One Commandment only-flashed forth. (perhaps with solemn music) and incense. The child looks at it - in light - receives it and meditates on it. The light comes from the Commandment. The child's soul will respond - Something has come to my soul. What must I do? - I am the Lord They God Serve Me So Faith and Obedience.

(Similar Principle for Charity and ——— My soul must
obey - I am ready - I have faith,

So Again another Day,

"Honour thy Father and Mother"

I have heard it before - but never in this single impressive
way - in light - Now it comes from God to my soul. It is
something more beautiful (peri bella)

The response is easy. I do it naturally but now I feel
it more deeply. It grows on me. It is from God - my duty for
ever. (even beyond death).

Thus we cause to penetrate into the soul of the child
these religious sentiments. So we see here -a) Distinguishing
things (b) Analysis and Separation of Elements.

SO TO SUMMARISE

- (a) Prepared Environment.
- (b) Always the Preparation of the Soul of the Child.
- (c) An individual a soul - which awakens (sis eragli)
- (d) The call must be individual Tu! Tu!

(Just for you)

LECTURE 111

THE ALTAR - WHAT IS IT?

Last time I spoke of the Liturgical Calendar and the various
seasonal - motor exercises.

To-day we take up another point - Our aim is to show him how
we can make very small children understand what the altar is
or represents.

And to do it - not by oral teaching but by activity.

Furniture required.

The Atrium would have special furniture: Amongst this

- (a) Twelve Little Stools - very simple and ~~secure~~ in style.
- (b) An arm chair)Liturgical)
- (c) A Table - which is so constructed that it can be made smaller
- (d) White Table Cloths (three as in altar,)

HOW TO BEGIN

We begin with similar exercises as we have had in the ordinary schools. Thus they move the furniture silently - without noise - and learn to put each piece in its right place.

The stools and table placed along the wall. The armchair, whose place is distinguished on the wall by a small crucifix. It is the same table as mentioned before on which we place the liturgical colours - could be at any rate so - allora. a special table .

One exercise would be this - To take the six stools on one side and six on the other with the little arm chair in the centre under the small crucifix on the wall. It is first an exercise of exactness - to know how to place and replace the chairs.

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VESTMENTS

Another means is this to have the little ones ^{put} on vestments - while vestments adorned with ribbons of different colours.

- (a) One has a red ribbon.
- (b) One has a green ribbon. (most of them)
- (c) The others white ribbons.

So we choose 13 children to take part in a little drama.

The One with the Red Ribbon stands for Our Lord.

One with Green Ribbon - for Hope - stands for St. Peter the first Pope.

With the Dark Violet ribbon - it stands for Judas.

These little details don't give much information but they are important to fix the mind.

Thus we have so far.

- (1) The Table with stools to place and replace.
- (2) The little Vestments.
- (3) Certain Special people.
- (4) The Number 13.

Then comes the exercise for the children to take their ^{places} on the little stools 6 on each side of the armchair with its occupant with the red ribbon.

Table Cloths Chalice and Plate.

Next the children place on the table, the table cloths And - later - (a) Chalice and (b) A plate.

THE EXPL. NATION.

THE EXPLANATION.

Then the Teacher can explain that they are doing what was done before - when ^{Our hands} ~~at~~'s disciples went to get ready the table for the Last Supper.

So we have these little scenes of dramatic representation. They bring to memory (fanno recordare) these things - table, 12 disciples, Our Lord, bread and wine - and special disciples.

THE STORY IS TOLD SIMPLY

After a time ~~there~~ there is given a simple explanation of what happened .(a) Jesus is dead - (non c'e piu.) And one of the Disciples is the cause of his death.

(b) So 2 Persons are missing. So we only have Green and white ribbons left. (Matthias)

(c) So they go to the table - and instead of opening it made it small.

(d) Where had been the armchair for Jesus, there is placed in his memory a crucifix.

(e) Two Candles are brought and put on each side.

(f) Then - as a memorial - the Chalice and Bread are brought. They are covered up as if they are no longer of any use. It is all very sad.

(g) ~~Then as~~ Whilst this is being done the other children stare solemnly and looked on.

(h) They sing hymns and make a procession.

- (j) The children could tie a cord round their waste as in mourning.
- (k) The Procession over, they return to the table the one with the green ribbon in the centre the other on 2 sides in a line - like Priest and Communicants.

The aim is to give the impression that the Altar in the Church is the same as the Table in the Last Supper.

SHOULD WE TEACH CHILDREN ABOUT THE PASSION.

One might ask: ought we to teach small children about the Passion?

Catholic children are born with the Crucifix in front of them. They are brought up to see it everywhere in their homes, church, they handle it. And at this early age small children absorb what even they find in their environment. but sensu judicose without judgment .

So far this reason -

When we tell them that it was crucified it is something they accept quite naturally.

But with Non-Catholic children it would be different.

A BEAUTIFUL STORY

Some small children found a set of cards representing The Passion. They were in desperation. They ran about in horror saying "Look what they have done to this man. Some people have wounded him. They ran about in such desperation that some one had to console them by saying. "Yes, it did happen! but afterwards it came all right again. He was resurrected.

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Then they were so pleased: and ran around telling every-
one. "Do you know that J.C. has risen from the dead. He is
alive again. This story brought with it great agitation to
their souls and a great joy. [cf The Story of Tom Silevick.
+ 6 Crosses

A SORT OF VIA CRUCIS.

So we could have something similar to give to the souls
of our children. We could have objects - not exactly a Via
Crucis but something the same idea. And then followed by
The Resurrection. ---

The Principle Being. --

That these things should not be given as Religious
Instruction but as Movement exercises which would thus impress
themselves in the soul.

Religious Teaching would be something apart but -

These exercises, these certain actions, should evoke a sent-
iment. One could think of the Atrium as a place where they
would do these things with a special solemnity.

EVOKING A SENTIMENT.

Thus with a darkened room - dim religious light - they
could come to this table quickly - solemnity - perhaps carr-
ying lighted candles and singing hymns.

All this would have as it aim to cause to penetrate this
idea - that the Altar is the Table of the Last Supper.

That it was there Jesus had eaten for the last time
with his disciples -

That one of them betrayed them -

That one was chosen as his representative } -

To continue the Church. And thus this Table becomes an altar for all Christmas - and the things on it are to record are to remind us of all these events.

SO PRENDE VIVENDO IN QUESTO AMBIENTE.

Thus all this is something which they take on simply by living in this environment.

And it is a Preparation for the Teaching which comes later

Our Aim isto teach the Liturgy and the Catechism but we cannot do it tutto ad un tutto - all at *once* -

WE MUST GIVE IT SENSORY - MOTOR WAY -

We must give it first with the Senses and Movement because they could not take it in any other way. Which means that we can and should give a Religious Preparation in this way - and not give up the idea of Religious Teaching until the age comes when the intellect is advanced enough to understand Religious Teaching with the intellect. So we give - Religion in its Sensory - Motor Aspect.

THE YOUNG CHILD AN ABSORBER.

We know the very small child takes in much and continually from his environment at this time - he is an "essere assortente" - and we can fix what he takes in in this way deep in their souls. So then this insieme - this whole - this collection of exercises and little acts - have this aim.

TO CREATE LOVE AND TEND-NESS TOWARDS OUR LORD

It is a Form of Homage.

by these little children -
the only form they can give - (cf. The Jongleur Before the
Blessed Sacrament) This show movement; this silence; this lov-
ing attention - doing which is born in their souls a great love
and tenderness (tenderness)

A SOLID PREPARATION

And therefore later on we can start from this basis,
laid at this very early age, without having to start from the
very beginning (cf. Sensual Geometry).

PREPARATION OF THE RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT

SAY IT WITH FLOWERS.

This would then be a Preparation of the Religious
Sentiment by means of the Senses and Movement - a very vital
part of Training - And in this way we would suscite a
spiritual Sentiment -

A COMPARISON

"Say It With Flowers".

A little child is by its mother; and thinks her the
most beautiful being in the world. He wants to express this
sentiment. He has no words or ideas with which to do so.
He can only do it through senses and movement. He gives
her a flower; or puts his arms round her. But at the same
time this expression deprives his tenderness.

In the same way these scenes with their action arouse
a tenderness and love.

ACTS LIKE A LIVING SEED

In this way this sentiment of tenderness and love so aroused is like a seed planted in the child's soul. A first seed in the soul of the child who could not be taught on the intellectual plane.

SOME OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

Some people would say:-

Why not bring the child into the Church to see these same things - the altar etc., to arouse this sentiment.

We reply:-

- (1) Because the Church is not made for Education but for worship.
- (2) The children couldn't carry out these actions again and again at their own rhythm.
- (3) Everything in the Atrium is simplified and all the furniture and appertenancies made to their proportions and scale.

OUR DUTY TO PREPARE THE ENVIRONMENT

Now if it is true - as we believe - that children can acquire these sentiments at this tender age is our duty to provide them with the means - i.e. The Prepared Environment.
 A place for action and living.
 It would be impossible for the small child of 3½ and to do it in the Church.

It is a Definite Teaching Fog

It is not only a question of arousing the religious sentiment.

At the same time certain definite elements are acquired which will be used later on.

LATER STAGE

At a later stage we can make use of objects for study. This would be at 5 or 6 yrs. when he begins to read and write.

LATER STILL

We should give him different and more advanced means - for studying the Liturgical Year and the Mass.

OUR WHOLE POINT IS THIS

We should not wait to begin our religious instruction only when the children have reached the age of reason - when they can use their intelligence to acquire culture - but we should begin to teach,

in all epochs of life.

Only we adults - in doing so - must use the means (at each stage) which permit these truths to penetrate.

It may seem to us these teachings may seem imperfect.

but

They are only means at our disposal for that particular time. And this forms the basis for succeeding ages.

EACH AGE PREPARES THE NEXT

Thus the first stage prepares for the second.

The Second for the Third - and so on

That is we must form planes of development according to the psychological development of the child.



... of the child, and the power of the child
is in the world - and it is worthy of the creation of the age
order of the world of civilization; just as in the old days we had
the Heracles and the Achilles in the age of Barbarism,
later the Hercules and Demetrius, Juvenal, St. Thomas de
Vulgaris...

... and the Roman Empire.
We must be sure that education for the Church should be such
as to give the child a sense of the sacred, in youth, in the
mysteries of the Church, of death and of living.

... for the Faculty and the
Catholic, because of our belief in the future life.

... we must - in other words - give both the function and the
organism of the child the same as the child is.

We must especially provide the child with the same...

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Notes on a Conversation with Dr. Montessori 1938?

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Re Religious Orders

They come into existence when God wishes to bring something new into the world.

They come in "Periodi Sensitivi", in Social development, when an idea is in the air - Aneid is felt in Society.

As The Function Creates the Organism - the new movement makes new rules and new forms.

Now at thistime thid idea of the Child, and the Power of the Child is in the world - and it is worthy of the creating of the new order as its form of expression : Just as in the old days we had The Hermits and Benedictines in the Age of Barbarism, Later the Franciscians and Dominicans, Jesuits, St. Vincent de Paul societies etc.

Religious Education and the Heroic Spirit.

We need an education militaire for the Church Militant. We must arouse the heroic spirit (spirito eroico) in youth: inspire enthusiasm andthe disregard of death and suffering.

This sHOUld be easier for us, than for the Fascists and Nazis and Communists, because of our doctrine of the future life.

We must - in other words - give both the function and the organism (if an organ does not function in atrophies.

We must specially prepare the conscience in this idea - eg. Confession

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is like a sort of oath a military oath - a promise (not to sin again) It should be taken with the seriousness of an oath not only just gabbled off.

Conviction necessary

We must arouse Conviction: for if you are not convinced with a thing you will not die for it. So we must first have chiarezza - charity and we must give many examples of the combative element in the Church Ex. the martyrs.

Christ as a Hero

We must also think of Christ as a Hero and not simply a victim.

Not as a poor person to be pitied only -

We must not simply make him a victim but a conqueror.

"In hoc signo vincam" We ~~x~~ have tended to overemphasise the victim aspect.

Two things are Necessary

1. Enthusiasm.

Here in other words we must have what corresponds to exaltation of martyrs.

2. To be ready to die

To achieve this - we repeat - we must have Chiarezza - Clear knowledge with regard to the Church -

They must know what a wonderful society it is in order to be enthusiastic about it.

So we must have an instruction which makes clear The Greatness of the Church.

RE THE SACRAMENTS

The teaching on these should be done in a more solemn manner, and individually (as is the usual principle with the Montessori Method.

In all the Sacraments we have a ~~new~~ promise. This idea of a promise should be brought more clearly into consciousness.

1 So many Catholics are weak and give (down there) so that no wonder other people push them scornfully and clearly out of the way (li spazza via:) They are villachi scoundrels and too attached to life and possessions.

CHRIST THE HERO

Christ wished to die: it was his deliberate choice. Therefore he was as much hero as victim (victim and priest in one) He was a hero ready to die for an idea - But Catholics are so fearful (paroso) and they have been given an education which half paralyzes them.

We must teach them that life itself is of no value unless it is devoted to a great idea or a Person.

So we must teach the heroic spirit and not simply teach the idea of resignation.

We must build up a batallion of youth who see the world as it is in its greatness.

Youth must be trained to

1 be carefless of Death.

2 ^{but} Not to kill.

The Spiritual Exercise of St. Ignatius bring out this point perfectly.

1 Comparison with the Fascists.

At beginning (the Fascists were just a little group - but a resolute one - Each with a green scarf with a skull across bones on it)- to indicate that they are not afraid of death:-

Heaven ^{of} ~~is~~ the Pharisees.

Some of the most dangerous people are in the Church. "Beware of the power of the Pharisees".

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Aug. 9th Landhouse Beck

THE CHURCH AS THE MIRROR OF THE WORD (Il Specchio et Mondo)

These conversations took place in Aug. 1950 at a Hotel called Landhouse Beck, situated in the Mountains near the village of _____ above Innsbruck. It happened one day that I mentioned that the origin of hospitals was in the Monastic Orders.

The Church a Model Society.

It is interesting to see how certain good elements in Sacraments began first within the Church out of Charity, and were afterwards taken up by the State.

Eg. Hospitals It was the Religious who first began hospitals for the sick (witness our good friend and patron Rahere of St. Bartholomews)

Indeed at the very beginning their aim as the ideal implies was more than that of hospitality than the care of the sick. But the one led to the other and thus it was that the religious orders founded the first hospitals. (Here I mention that I was teaching in the Montessori School which was been run by the wife of the rector of St. Bartholomew's Church in Smithfield. Both the Church and St. Bartholomew's hospital just next to it were founded at the same time by Rahere in the 15th Century.

This remark seemed to spring a sort of mine in Dr. Montessori's conscience.

Dr. M. "Yes it is true. The Church is really a Society, brought into existence, by the Holy Spirit - its members acting unconsciously - in such a way as to show forth those elements which are necessary for the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven throughout, the world.

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At this point she related an amusing story -:

"THE ANNACHRIST :

30 years ago when I was in California, Marie - who was always an original friend with an Annachrist. This anarchist often came to see us. He was always going in and out of prison; and used to talk continually of the injustice of things in our Society. Offence's gilded hand can shove by Justice'. I was partly the burden of his complaint; and also that the law would not take into account the individual up bringing and his social and moral handicaps.

"I told him, says Dr. M. that in a true society everyone the good and the bad should equally be brought up before the tribunal. "Yes" he argued, eagerly, that's what I think "I continued" (says Dr. M.) that in my society I would make no difference - the highest and mightiest in the land - they would all have to go equally before the tribunal.

The Anarchist became more delighted and enthusiastic - "Excellent" that is just what I think - but that would be Utopia! "No", said Dr. M. such a society already exists in which both good and bad are obliged by law to go before the Tribunal of Justice.

It already exists in the Catholic Church in to Tribunal of Confession!

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1. The first thing is that the future government must get to know the people.

2. If the future government will not know the people he is not fit to be a ruler of a higher order.

ON GOVERNMENTS AND WHO IS FIT TO GOVERN.

It is incredible to me the way this modern world chooses its governors. In every other department of life besides Government, there is a special preparation. - The lawyer, the Doctor, the shipbuilder, the carpenter - all are prepared for their rank for many years. But - in this Democratic world - the choice of governor is made by the ~~ex~~ ignorant masses who have no preparation for making that kind of judgment. It was as if a group of persons went out into the street and said "we will take the third person we meet and make him Prime Minister".

How different should it be - and how different is it in the Church.

On another day the conversation turned on the question of how in the modern world these persons are elected to whom the power of Government is handed over.)

She went on to describe the sort of preparation that has been ~~ex~~ gone through by almost everyone who is ~~x~~ in a high position of authority in the Church, as for instance Bishop or Cardinal.

1. You have the village Cure who lives in intimate touch with the common people and knows each individual their problems, their sufferings, hopes, fears and difficulties. Th
The first thing is that the future governor must get to know the people.
2. If the Cure does well and shows promise he is promoted to be the Rector of a bigger parish - a wider area. Here he now comes across more ~~wide~~ and more different problems; more varied groups and social movements; and many executive problems calling for prompt and independent judgment.
3. If he does very well on this level he is made a Bishop and responsible for a whole diocese.
4. Then if he continues distinguishing himself - he may be made a cardinal.
5. Then with a sort of modified Democracy - the Cardinals choose the Pope. (They are) They have real knowledge of the problems of government, and therefore choose quite different from ignorant masses who have had no such long experience.

In London at Present there is great confusion because ~~there~~ those who govern have had no such long experience and do not hesitate to make a shoemaker, or coal miner, Cabinet minister or Prime Minister or President.

The Individual Touch

You cannot have real loyalty to those who rule unless the individual feels that he individually counts and is cared for

personally by the Rulers.

In the Church the individual knows that the Government really exists for his benefit and that ultimately in the age of the Church it is the individual sould which is counted of infinite value.

The Communists understand this in their own way; and deliberately set to work first of all with their "cells" upon individuals. Trying to make each of them feel that the Communists are genuinely interested in their own, individual problems and difficulties. (See article in the Communist work in U.S. A., espirer amongst the in Salem district of New York). In this way they arouse an individual loyalty and enthusiasm to the Communist movement comparable to a religious devotion.

OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW TESTAMENT DISPENSATION

In general apart from the first two the Ten Commandenents are all negative. Thou shalt not ---- Mario once said "Good" I dont steal I dont murder anyone I dont want an other man's wife (one is more than enough for me!) etc., and then folded his hands and said "Good" now what do I do? or am I a saint already!"

This shows that the Jewish dispensation was incomplete - it had no finality - no end - no ~~an~~ aim - wasn't leading to perfection.

Then comes Christ - and what is the finality? and purpose?

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A Kingdom - the setting up of a Universal Kingdom which should extend over the whole earth - something positive and end to be reached.

This Kingdom - the Church - is The Work of the Holy Spirit a creation which goes on through the ~~cent~~ centuries.

CHARITY AND ORGANIZATION.

The great thing about the Church is the Organization. An individual act of charity is good - but it ends in itself but an organization is a mighty thing and does far more. Also has far greater possibilities. Christ was the greatest organizer, and the problems of the Church were largely problems of organization. This organization was carried on by the Holy Spirit - through individuals who were largely unconscious of what they were building up.

THE MIDDLE AGES.

"Were a model society - even the Kings took their crowns off and laid them at the feet of the Pope: It was one civilization a unity. This was the model of the cosmic society. What the Church has done from the beginning and through the centuries out of charity Society is coming to do out of necessity. Thus, care for the poor, now we are seeing The Welfare States coming into existence and doing what the Church has always done for the poor

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Eg. St. Francis de Sales and Madame de Chantale and their great work - This has set the pace and shown long

Similarly in India the coming of the Christian Civilization shamed the Indians into starting hospitals and creches - (not giving up the custom of burning their widows.

To take another example-;

Now we have the Ministry of Agriculture etc., and great agricultural worries undertaken but it was the monks who first showed the way - ordained the fins and introduced agriculture and so forth. It was not so with Education. It was the

THE COSMIC TASK.

From time to time there has been a tendency amongst some Catholics to be taken up too exclusively with the worth of saving individual souls - and preparing them for Paradise - and letting this world "go hang."

But now the Church should also realize Man's Cosmic Task - Indeed she has the greatest part to play in the Cosmic Harmony - She is the brain and nervous system of the whole world organism.

The Present Pope has realized this more than any other.

A NEW WORK FOR THE CHURCH.

From her Uncle Professor Stoppani M. got this idea of the working together of all forces, inorganic and organic, in a great world harmony -

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but he did not bring Man into it except as a wondering and reverent Spectator. What was the good of having this wonderful cosmic drama and no one there to witness it/^{and} applaud He Here man the spectator !! But M. has gone further than her famous uncle! Like Puck mankind can now say "What a play turned. I'll be actor as well as auditor." And so it is: Man has a cosmic Mission. The individual is not here simply for his own sake - (as a preparation for eternity) but to co-operate in this great Cosmic Task.

Thy Kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven." Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

A NEW VIEW OF INSTINCTS.

This great Cosmic Creation which God has brought about is not being made directly by Him but by his agents.

This Cosmic Drama has been going on from the beginning in various acts-:

1. The Creation of the world.
2. Geological Periods.
3. Creation of Plants and Animals.

The instincts are the means by which the plants are made to go do God's will. Unconsciously of course. These instincts such as self Preservation - Food - Sex etc. - urge on the species to accomplish their particular tasks. Each has its Cosmic Task which contributes to the general harmony.

But with Man it is Different. Being self-conscious he can consciously co-operate. Hence the meaning of Prayer by which he can learn the will of God.

This Consciousness of Man's Cosmic Task connected with the new Knowledge - liberation of infinite atomic energies which are now in his hands - to make or mar whole world.

He has now these immense possibilities by which he can carry out this Cosmic Task.

(Aug. 10th)

THE GREAT MIRACLE OF CHRIST) THE CHURCH.

The desire to witness a miracle is a desire for a vulgar - ("An adulterous generation that seeketh a sign and no sign will be given saveth that of the prophet Jonah) All religions have their "miracles" - their wonders eg. the Indians with their gures and Fakin etc., (walking on red stones etc.,)

Il miracolo- The one great miracle of Christ is the formation of the Church. No other religion has anything remotely corresponding to it. It is the evidence of a "Saprenza Divine" (a divine wisdom)

The Church is a society - it is the Mirror of the Future Society on Earth - Et un specchio" - something prophetic of what world society will someday be.

(The great miracle is the Resurrection - which made possible the Church)

ON RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

The Church is eminently practical. The Religious Orders do something, accomplish great works into the ('campo practiceale')

in contrast with the B. Monks who simply contemplate and do nothing but look onwards.

Religious Orders arise at a Sensitive Period in society. They create the organ - as the function creates the organism in execution - and this arouses in society. For example St. Fr. de Sales and Mando de Charatelle hospitals for the sick and so gave an example to the world.

But more than this. It was and when the sick were kept together and cared for in hospitals for a considerable period of time that a sacrifice became possible. The New Religious Order bursts forth - as it were - with a tremendous impetus (the Franciscans and Dominicans spreading over Europe in a generation)

Religious Order confined with a Machine.

In former times work on the land was done simply by hand and by individuals. Now the work is done by machines which are able to accomplish as much as a great number of individuals So the Religious Order as compared with the individual is like a machine; and is able to accomplish much more, and in a shorter time.

The world sees and copies the ideas of the Religious Orders, and so their aim does not stop with them. Eg. Education first began in the monasteries and is now general.

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15.

In India still all the sick are cared for separately. Their are no hospitals except for a few for the Americans and English etc., G—— complained to me of the poor and desparate state of children in India.

Right from the beginning of her work M. considered the possibility of their coming into existence a new religious order to spread the new conception of the power of childhood as a constructive factor in building up a new world.

The Scope The aim of this new order would be the elevation of Humanity - building a new society through the creative power of the child. (The —— mind and so forth)

The need for such an Order is urgent - she continued I have thought and given diplomas for 40 years and yet nothing really great has been done.

But the world is ready for this new movement - this new idea.

The Contrast. Release of Energies in Nature - Atomic Energies. Release of Energies in the Child - Creative Energies.
For or Against the Church.

One who is not in the Church regard it in a dispassionate and operative manner. I see it as one religion against many and it differs from all others in that it has this living organization and power - because it is the creation of the Holy Spirit.

Most people who are outside the Catholic Church are against it - combat it eg. Protestants and Communists, - but that is not so with me. I see its unique value in

in society quite calmly and dispassionately.

I say again this is the vital thing about the Church - Its organization. The individual can do nothing but the church acts fruitfully because it is organised. But this formation and this New Religious Order is for others to do. "I am finished - my work is done."

But the Holy Spirit works and creates in the Church through its ministers subconsciously.

I said that Grace works through the Subconscious - which is a strange receptacle in which all sorts of strange things congregate.

Aug. 13th

I began our conversation one day by mentioning that in the village Mass this morning at the end suddenly an old man appeared on the 'stage' before the altar with a coat hanger upon which deftly put the Priest's cope. Then I told what a business it was this local village funeral - lasting 2 days with 2 great meals - lunch the first day - breakfast the second day. She said it was more expensive to die than to live! - and that "they - we waiting for the Resurrection!"

THE STORY OF CONrado FERRANTE.

We got on to talking about the Saints and Cannonization; and M. said that there were a tremendous lot of Saints being made these days. "A sort of Reclam". An advertisement for the Church.

This led her on to tell a most interesting story from her experience.

Item 1 I was making fun of this business of making Saints; and took as an example the case of Cintad - Ferrante. He was "just an ordinary man" - a good man - and a lawyer in Padua I think. Very pious and all that and used to go to Mass everyday. But I insisted quelle non ha fatto niente - niente! So we make a Saint of them except to show how stupid other people are.

Item 2. When I was in India I was flying with Mario to Ceylon give a Conference there. I was ^{ill in} taken ^{by} plane. Mario telegraphed to Colombo to get these interested to cancel her appointment and have doctors and ambulance in attendance. I arrived in Colombo and there was a group of people ready to ^{serve} ~~XXXXXX~~/me. I was taken at once to a hotel, doctored and was put to bed - and not to be disturbed.

Item 3. Suddenly I was aware that this same person - whose very name I had forgotten - was there ~~s~~ in the room with me - as a presence. I felt as though he were over there in the corner. I was quite certain he was there, and quite astonished because I had no interest in him whatever - was not thinking of him - and had forgotten ~~his~~ his name. I felt timid. Not so timid however as to what to say to this visitor. "Go away please I do not wish to be disturbed by any one until to-morrow. Then you can say what you wan to "I can't say anything or see anyone until to-morrow.

Item 6. The next morning came a ringing at my door in the hotel and a telegram was shoved under the door (although strict orders had been given not to disturb me) It was from the Italian Government promising 2 million Lire for the Congress. I was strictly stupified and at once carried it with the visitation of the night before.

Item 4 cont'd. The Italian Government had promised to give 2 million lire to help on with the organisation and expenses generally. But though they had more or less agreed to give us the money it was not forthcoming and we were in great straights.

Item 4. cont'd. At this time we were in great anxiety about the Congress in Marino. The Italian^a Government had had back and the money it had more or less agreed to pay was not forthcoming. We were in great spirits to know what to decide about it.

Item 6. The Congress in San Marino was a most amazing success beyond all expectation. Everything happened as though an unseen benefactor was putting the strings. All sorts of great people came in - Cardinals included - who were most friendly. I could not help thinking it was this Blessed Cintade Ferrante I was so impressed by all this that I wrote to Rev. M. Foundress of the order whether it would be alright to have a saint as the President of a Montessori Congress.

No reply! I am sure the good Mother must have thought either I was mad or joking.

I asked to have a photo of this saint: but no one seemed the least interested. At last a friend of mine found one and sent it.

And now when things are going badly - eg. Italy or Holland in M. Movement - we say What is C. Ferrante doing? "Bisagno honorto" - And most of this was meant really seriously.

Item 8. It is ~~most~~ ^{not} unusual for a saint to come and do a Grace ("grazia") to someone who has not previously prayed for it. But it was so in this case for the first time! So he must have thought there was something important in the Montessori Movement.

In fact Cintado Ferrante's idea of justice was an original one and very more like mine and most in accord with my idea of the Cosmic Plan. She mentioned the case of an Italian Peasant who said "I have lived for 50 years and have had nothing to do with la Justicea" (Justice) - as though the term may mean the law-courts for criminals and not a positive thing in itself. (Except ~~the~~ ^{your} justice exceed that of the scribes and pharases you shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven)

Montessori seemed quite pleased with the idea of putting G.F. as the Patron Saint of the Method.

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THIS COSMIC POSSESSES HER WHOLLY

She keeps referring back to it, and linking everything up with it. Eg. This Ferrante Saint and his idea of Justice. Love Daled out Cosmically.

Did you even hear my idea of the quantity of love in the Universe and its limitations.

Eg. in Animals. Sexual love comes first for a time - to bring about a new generation - the new family - and then it disappears. Just the making season and no more.

It is given for a Cosmic Purpose - it preserves the particular species.

Maternal love Similarly is given just as much and for as long as it is needed. The animal is filled with an intense love of its of spring - will even sacrifice its own life for it. (of lulu and her puppies!) But when they are grown up this love disappears and the Mother cares not a jot more for its offspring than for any others. Even turns them out.

But the Point to be remembered is that love is something given for a purpose - to help the individual carry on a Cosmic Task. - and (gual) woe to any one who does not make use of it - or any species which does not for it will lead to disaster. (This reminds one of Sopenhauer's Metaphorick of Love)

It is the same with -

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INTELLIGENCE A COSMIC GIFT.

We see that all species are endowed with a very brilliant but very limited intelligence - not a conscious one - but belonging to the species - Thus take the case of Frogs If it is damp it makes 2 layers of covering with an air-space in between. (what man discovered millions of years after). Again the butterfly which lays the eggs under the leaf, so as not to be destroyed by the rain. Infinite and infinitely interesting are these flashes of intelligence on Nature.

(I told her of the book I was making

- picture A. B. Parachute
- A. B.

AUG. 16th

Looked at purely objectively the Catholic Church is the most wonderful institution in the world. I could write a defence of it - better than the Priest in it! It is the Mirror of the world to come. It has everything society needs in advance.

Speaking again of Justice - she remarks that in the world the Tribunals seek out the criminals and the bad things that are done. So the whole attention of the world is on evil in crime. They even write the public to come and see how justice is carried out. The papers are full of Crimes; the journalists run to support them, to photograph everything connected with them. The Cinema displaying them - so that even the children study them and copy them, and so we get increasing juvenile delinquency. So it is evil crese, crese,

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crease, grows, grows and grows.

On the contrary the Church has a Tribunal for studying and judging not what is evil, but what is good. - the tribunal before which the Saints are brought in order to see if they are saints. (Even to the Avocation Diaboli). And in this way the attention of people is brought to focus in good actors and good characters. Indeed the whole cult of the Saints varies in this direction - Protestants and others outside the Church pooh pooh! the idea of the Saints and criticise the whole cult - but they simply don't understand.

THE LUXURY OF THE CHURCH.

When I was in India at Kodackanal there was a Swedish lady - a missionary - who took my course and the lectures on the Catholic Church. She came to me and said that we Protestants had missed many things out.

Protestants - without understanding - criticise the luxury of the Church - the large amount of money spent on them and their appertanances. But I ~~had~~ told her all this luxury was for the people.

Supposing there was a great palace and a number of high personages, marvellously dressed, how people would regard it as a favour to be allowed in to see it all. But that is exactly what happens in the Church. There we see the most wonderful vestments. (Also manners and deportment).

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There is to be a wonderful concert and the best music; and only the rich can buy tickets - but here in the Church they get it for nothing. In the museums you see wonderful collections of statues, paintings, and jewels and you have to pay an entrance fee - but in the Church all this can be seen and enjoyed by the poor - and ~~xxx~~ all for nothing. (c.f. The Taxi Driver in Communistic Barcelona. "They have taken everything from us by closing the Churches - the only thing left for us are the Bull- fights!")

MAN THE INTERMEDIATOR

It is often complained against the Catholic Church that it has come between Man and God by introducing the Priest - cf. Confession. Why can't you confess to God? (I out here that we can, do and must confess to God - but we must also go to the Sacrament of Confession.) She ~~it~~ said - If you are hungry - you cannot take fruit at the nearest tree - it belongs to a man who cultivates it - ditto if you are cold you cannot slay the nearest sheep and take its wool. So, as society progresses, we find we are not in immediate contact with Nature (which is God's creation) but her gifts are mediated to us by Man.

Protestants and people like the Quakers are like people who "go back to Nature" - and live half-naked like savages in the wood.

What is to be remembered however in this comparison is that the institutions created by the Church are not man's institutions but created by the Holy Spirit.

I defend the Church with a sort of Ragioni Mystica. - a mystical reasoning.

It would be a good thing to write a defence of the Church from this point of view.

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------|
| (Higher form of Justice | Science. |
| Hospitals | History. |
| Education | Drama. |
| Art | Slavery. } |
| Music | Equality } |
| Philosophy | |
| Freedom, etc. | |

PROTESTANTISM THE RELIGION OF A BOOK.

Aug. 7th.

Protestantism is a religion of a book. The author is a book whereas Christ said there were many more things he had to Teach His Disciples, and promised to send the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete"which will guide you into all truth and bring to mind the things I have taught you." He told them in fact to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit and not for the coming of a book!

It was not a book on the of it that fluttered over their heads - but tongues of flame - a living sign "Come Holy Spirit and fill the Hearts of the faithful and kindle in them the Spirit of thy Love" - not a book.

CREATOR OF SPIRITS.

And so the Holy Spirit is the Creator in the Church. It is the Holy Spirit - working through ~~xxx~~ countless unconscious individuals which has created the Church - indicating the Liturgy : guides it continually - a Living Authority and Guide - not a dead book. Hence the Living Voice of the Church.

TWO ANNUNCIATIONS.

It was the Holy Spirit who overshadowed the Virgin Mary and created the Christ in her - "The Holy Spirit shall overshadow Thee -----

And similiary the coming of the Holy Spirit was announced before hand by Christ - and again the The Church the mystical body of Christ - The coming of the Paraclete.

SIMILARITIES IN THE CHURCH AND MONTESSORI.

Fr. Tacetiu Ventun was once very interested in the various similarities or parallels between the Church and the Montessori Method. When I lectured in Paris once on Discipline some priests came up to me and remarked how strange it was that the children showed as it were the laws of the Spiritual Life.

NEED OF A RELIGIOUS ORDER.

I said: what we need is a group a society of people to carry on the work of the method - disciplined and full of charity and not always quarelling with one another like x and y and z etc. "Yes" she replied . Fia ci viole un Ordre Religiosa. Yes, what is needed is a Religious Order.

Aug. 20th

It was a beautiful day and we imigrated from the into the sunshine. I told her I had now to get St. Thomas Aquine. by G.K.C. She ~~was~~ said I am not specially interested in philosophy and my mind does dnot work in that way. It is too high I cannot understand it. What I am interested in is facts - my mind worries least in this sphere of facts.

We got into the Cosmic Plan again. Yes, that is the important thing. I will tell you again (You dont know anything about it ! tu ne sai niente !) Everything that lives them on this earth has there 2 important aspects -:

1. It works and lives and shuggles for itself for its own life its own existence.
2. But at the same time everything is also out a "Cosmic Purpose" - doing its own task - which is for the good of the whole. There is the same principle in Ecology. There's the Beeg for instance. They go to the flowers solely with their own end in view - to get honey. But at the same time, without knowing it, they cause the fertilization of the flowers they visit. Look at the Worms. Nothing gives them more joy than to eat the soil continuously. There they live in the dark, under the ground eating earth

whole day. They do it for their own interest but at the same time by accomplishing a great work - that of preparing the soil for cultivation - as Darwin so well showed.

Other animals eat dead bodies, by preference when they could eat far nice things - others here on excrements: and so purify the world. Then we have the corals etc.

(I fetched a god fly off her sleeve - and minded what was its cosmic mission! Yes she said things may so wrong her and then in the details but on the whole the general plan is undesirable. Yes we men can go wrong - far more wrong than the insects.')

Lein(quel padre Elurie cru t'intesse non po tascara reposau un po! - (Don't bring him into everything.)

MANGRAU MANGRARE.

The great individual effort - all this work on the part of the individual for himself and is the problem of Food. Eating. I often thought to write a book on "Denti" Teck and what they signify! It is al a struggle for food, and supposing the things in nature - the martyrs and the carols for instance took it upon themselves to fast for the good for their souls the whole cosmic would get upset! This idea of the importance of eating - of Food - is and carried right up into the spiritual life, and is seen in the Eucharist - Daily Bread.

I am not interested in how these instincts work or how the Absorbent Mind works in the small child absorbing. Grammatical forms even - though for me the fact that it is so.

We can always fall back on the on the Padre Eterno as we generally do: but we aughtn't to drag Him into everything!

THE DAISIES AT OUR FEET)

The daisies in the lawn they are living their life, but how beautiful they are. This Beauty is also a part of this Cosmic Life.

What is the Scapo Cosmico + on itself I don't know - but certainly man has too his Cosmic Mission. To build the super-nature to co-operate untelligently with God - hence the meaning of prayer.

I mentioned the idea that some people say that this world will be the basis of Heaven, and said I don't know. But I could imagine the world made very beautiful - so that looking down upon it from an aeroplane - as we look down on this flower studded grass - one could see the earth made beautiful houses - each one a monument of art - "as made as beautiful in shells. And in the rooms would be beautiful works of art.

THE DAILY WASH

Referring to the idea of the necessity for everyone to wash physically everyday she said everyone should be the same spiritually - as the Church suggests. (Daily prayers, Mass Examination of Conscience)

Especially I have in mind these people who judge others in

Aug. 23rd The World Pattern

This Catholic Church is creating a phenomenon that one simply cannot deny: it is something which should be studied objectively. It has many characteristics which should be studied - but people don't realize how wonderful an institution is. What people are trying to find out after 2000 years it has known from the beginning. People now in this atomic era are still miles and miles behind - and do not begin to understand what the church knows. -

If I was a Governor of a Kingdom I would make a special study of the way the Church governs to learn from it.

In my Method I learned many things from the practice of the Church.

I am now discussing such things as consubstantially of the 3 Persons in the Holy Trinity. I am looking at the Church as a Practical Concern. One should learn from it how to govern.

There are in it an infinity of particulars which are worthy of our study.-

The idea of Communism - was there at the beginning and is still living in the Church but Spezzalo (broken up) and found in the various Religious Orders.

These Religious Orders which I have confined to Maet are not ~~an~~ only strong as are machines (like the Rummung Machines they had for knocking down works in Medieval Times)

but are immortal. They live on century after century - see Benedictines and Bernadettes.

We see civilization is built on Machines and so it is in this higher series.

COMPOUND WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Other religions - as Buddiasm etc. - had working philosophers and so forth but their civilization did not progress; the people remained without decent houses, but from the Church went out a new form of civilization.

MADAME DE CHANTALE

I have always been impressed with the work of Mme. de Chantale. She began with a love for the poor but the force was so great that it gathered together other women and so they founded hospitals etc.

Working together (the Machine) and the movement spread out with an insistable force. Man is essentially a social being. So we see in the Church a Mirage of the Future - of what does not yet exist - a Mirror of the Future, rejecting the forms that Society will eventually take up.

THE CHURCH . STUDY FOR THE FUTURE.

As in the past people discerned and attached and destroyed the savage races they met with - but now find them of value and study them to find out how social customes ~~organat~~ originated -so people instead of trying to ~~imply~~ ^{de they} the

Church will try to study it with seriousness to descerne in it the germs of later social development.

THE EQUALITY OF ALL MEN

That the Church has taught from the beginning that all men are equal in value - In fact amongst the first Christians a great number were slaves - who felt a new dignity.

Even the Pope in spite of his Infallibility has to go to Confession like any other man, and this preserves the equality of all men in the eyes of God - all of infinite value.

Cardinal Pizzardo - head of the Congregation of Instruction - was very stern on the method and when I came back from India paid me the great compliment of going to visit me at my hotel in Rome. He was my _____ in the idea of the Absorbent Mind, and put it down to the effect of Baptism! but I could not agree with him. It is evident the absorbent mind works no less amongst Pagans who have not been baptised at all. He was v. cross with me and if Sr. Jincomi had anything to do with me would excommunicate her almost!

The World is a Thousand Years Behind.

Are these others with their planes and Atlantic Pacts and Unescos a 1000 years behind - they simply are not in the same category.

THE QUESTION GOVERNMENT

The C.C. is the only real and true democracy. Sing the uneducated Masses - and criminals etc. - the power to act as they do now is the most absurd arrangement. Instead look at the way the C. C. does it. First you must learn to know the people intimately and ~~xxxx~~ their needs.

So.

1. The Cure in the village - who does all the spade-work, knows the individuals their hopes and fears and cares etc.
2. The Rector - _____
3. Bishop - who now has a wider scope comes into contact with Patiters.
4. The Cardinals who rule the great pillars of the Church in all lands.
5. It is there people who have had all this training and experience - built right up for the people - who vale.
And it is a Real Democracy because the man they chose may have been a postman, peasant or Prime.

Protestants are outside all this - they are miles away.

They are like those Scrimme and the animals in an old fable who are straining ineffectually forward to _____ into human beings.

The Justice in the Church.

This is really wonderful. The criminal before the law remains a criminal - loses his human dignity - is branded by the society. But not so in the Church - who pardons and brings them back to life and dignity (Eg. Mary Magdeline) Only now after 2000 years is society beginning to treat the criminals as beings with human dignity and infinite possibilities.

Thousands of years hence - people will study the History of the Church to see how these things originated because all these things in the Church were there from the very beginning. (Cf. Newman)

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

The _____ now find it essential to have _____ and an organization to keep it informed of what is going on in its own state and the world. But the Church has had the best _____ of information the most perfect the world has ever known. It knows everything. - If there is a new heresy forming in another plan or the death of priests, it is informed and knows all about it.

cf. Newman and the _____

seeing by imitation and preparing a century or two in advance for what is to come and meeting it in advance.

THE CHURCH IS SUPER - INDIVIDUAL

It has a Divine Saprenza and goes on and carries out its work perfectly and even in spite of the individuals in it.

His Priest or Bishop may have neglected their duties, but no matter - the plan is carried out. The individuals carry out the plan unconsciously.

INDIA.

I went among the Theosophists to give a Course - but not as a Theosophist. I never had the least interest in their ideas - except as an Extravaaganza - a phenomen to be observed like anything else. I was completely indifferent to the movement. I did not live inside their compartment but they gave me a house outside the compartment. It was an enormous house - because it was surrounded by 100 ——— It had been built by some great ——— as his private residence. It was situated by the sea shore standing alone - except that not far away was a village.

When the war broke out we were in Villagrare - up in Wales - and we were arrested as Vatican citizens. The English without further ado confined me to this house (the house belonged to the Theosophists and my course with them was finished). Mario was taken to a "concentration camp" So here was I with one servant, shut up in this enormous palace - guarded day and night soldiers armed with rifles - I

Yes we ought to put such pictures before children - instead of these eternal pictures of just a lamb, or a hen etc.

Ems. How did this intelligence get into Nature?

M. Ah, that I don't know. God I suppose. That is what we always say when we don't know the causes of things: we just say "God".

Ems. I recalled the answers we give to children - which satisfies them -

Yes she said and it satisfies most adults also.

Here again her great point is that intelligence - consciously used and adaptable in all directions - is also to be used for a Cosmic Purpose - and not just to enjoy ourselves

These are all gifts from God.

Contacts of Different Kinds of Knowledge.

I referred to the interesting coming together (almost confondersi) of the Mneme and conscious memory in the children remembering words to make with the ~~xx~~ al phabet

Similarly in the idea of the child's goodness being the order of the universe (We don't say how good are the stars !)

And that after that was the possibility of rising to a different goodness which involved the conscience and the possibility of falling morally.

That I suggested is where we impringe upon the need of Grace.

To my surprise she did not flare up! - but agreed, only we must isolate things first and regard them separately. We can put them together and understand their relationship.

In both these examples (Mneme and Discipline), You see we came into the realm of this Cosmic Order,

AUG. 14th.

I have been thinking a lot of this question of the development of man from monkeys or similar beings and trying to fit in your theory with Darwins.

Let us leave Darwin aside for the moment and look at the facts. The young in monkeys are very far advanced at birth. I have seen a new born monkey - still wet - run away from its mother - looking this way and that - with bright little eyes - so that the mother had in fact to stop it going away.

Now let us suppose that one of these monkey-children was born in a more dependant state. A child new-born in comparison with the little monkey (scimmittino) is like one half-paralysed - it cannot sit up - cannot even raise its hand. Now supposing, as the monkey adult grew more intelligent - its young became more helpless. We could imagine the other monkeys gathering around and saying - "Poor thing!" its half-paralysed ! how sad! I hope it will get better ! etc." So the more intelligent became the parents the more stupid and imbecile would become the babies - a sort of just the opposite of hereditary - a "reversed hereditary" (hereditario roveschio !)

The more intelligent the parents the less able were the babies, and less competent than their ancestors as babies. These babies would in fact become less and less adapted to the environment and the life in it. They would not be able to hang on to their mothers, or speak their language, or fend for themselves, or run by themselves. They would become biologically inferior. This prolonged infancy is then a new thing - a special feature of man. Man had it from the beginning and it is a new step - a jump - a new thing altogether in evolution. One cannot imagine it coming slowly according to Darwins idea.

Darwins theory, and those of his followers were based on certain similarities in the Cranium - but they forgot the child and its nature - its behaviour which is just as important - more so - their similarities of construction. How could this prolonged infancy come with spontaneous variations etc.

Instinct - Behaviour - Fixed Grooves for the Species.

The animals are fixed in their behaviour. What they will do when they grow up, is always the same within certain limits. There is a spark of intelligence in each species - but unconscious - which teaches the bird to build its nest, the bee its cell and so forth. But the behaviour is fixed. Hence their "infant" can grow up quickly - he has not much to learn and it is given him through his instinct.

But with man it is different - He is not fixed in his behaviour - he is infinitely adaptive - can live in any part of the planet, move in land, sea, air and under the water.

Man is capable of Progress

And this capability of Progress is linked up with this long infancy and its power to absorb the new and progressing civilization.

These First Men Learned By Experience.

This 'poor man' born without instincts, was in a way worse off than the animals. By instinct the animal chooses the food and keeps to it. But the man was omnivorous. He would eat this and that and have ~~xxx~~ to learn by experience that these things were good and those _____. And so an experience was built up - a conscious social experience built up and held by memory and custom according to each tribe and race and climate and civilization. Also language was built up and extended and developed. But all this was not inherited, passed on like an instinct - like the instinct of the bee to suck honey in flowers, the tiger to hunt, the bird to build an invaring kind of nest.

How was it to be passed on? This language so carefully built up generation after generation, how were these gains to be capitalized. It could not be through hereditary - as it differed in different parts of the world. It was through the absorbent mind of this child in this mysteriously prolonged infancy.

This is the function of human infancy - to absorb and pass on the civilization of its group.

It is true that in a very complicated civilization it takes longer for the new generation to take it all in, and come abreast with it - (cf. European civilization with Terra Del Fuego.) But this does not mean that - for that reason the absorbent power of the Terra Del Fuego infant is less developed to correspond to a more primitive culture. The potentiality is their equality in all human babies. This indicates that it is something which belongs to man, as man a universal potentiality - not evolved, but their right from the beginning. There is no indication that there are babies with a only half- developed power of absorbing, corresponding to a half-developed culture - as would be the case of this faculty had been evolved.

Further there is no evidence that with babies of very primitive tribes the infancy is less prolonged, because there is less to absorb. It is the same in all. There is the same Time-table - set up at|so and so; speak first words (name s) and so and so. It is the same in all.

Dunique (therefore) this is a universal trait in man, and is far more important biologically speaking than that he has a coccyx.

To go back to Darwin.

Supposing you say that - as a "sport" - some of these primitive men became more intelligent. The result would be

that the intelligent ones would tend to survive.

But even supposing a more intelligent species did evolve in this way - only on earth should it alter the nature of their offspring? Infact - if anything - their offspring would be born more "svelto", more intelligent and alert (cf acquired characters are inherited) rather than less so; just as "puppies" are born more intelligent in certain intelligent breeds (Absation than others, or their chure

So that brings to the Third Point in which men differ from animals.

Mans Means of Defence.

Animals are born with various means of attack and defence - the tigers claws, and the fangs etc. Man is born naked and in his own psysical nature defenceless. How does he survive?

Everyone says - By his intelligence. But I say no, it is not so simple. Place a very intelligent person such as Dante (Aligluri) , or Aristotle in front of an angry Salve toothed tiger and see what his wonderful intelligence will do!

Let us go back to the Primitive Man and see what really did happen. Here are a group of individual men - with hands free feet free. They confer together about this common danger

the tiger. One says he comes always along a certain place to drink. Good we will dig a pit and cover it over. The Tiger falls in and they kill him together. So we see. First language joining all their heads together.

Second they put their heads together and pool their experience and intelligence. It is a collective intelligence which saves them (1)

Man's intelligence does not exist by itself. It is a social function (cf Social Law in the Spiritual World F. Jones)

So Man is something completely different from the animals. He is a new thing - biologically speaking and not an evolution Ems. This should be pleasing to the Catholic Theologians Cardinals etc.

They don't see it that way: they see it by as a matter of revelation in the Bible.

Ems. Still it is a coming together of and inter-confirmation of Truth as coming in two completely different sources.

(A Propose of this fact that man's intelligence does not exist by itself - Pape - Preuss - says -

"A Hypostasis is an individual substance, separate and distinct from all other substances of the same kind possessing itself, attributes and energies - which one in it)

Inch. C. July 27

THE CHILDREN'S MISSAL

LECTURE BY DR. MARIA MONTESSORI.

Dr. Maria Montessori gave the third and last of her lectures on Religious Education at The Cathedral Hall, Westminster, on July 10. The Rt. Rev. Bishop Browne of Pella presided, and about 400 people were present.

Dr. Montessori said that the time during Mass was certainly not the time to give the child instruction and explanation. She supported the idea that, during the Mass, the child should be left to himself to concentrate on the great Mystery as far as his intelligence and development enabled him to do so.

The lecturer then proceeded to describe a new form of Missal which she has devised specially for children. This Missal is so constructed that it calls into play the activity of the child in various original ways. It is, in fact, necessary for the child to prepare his Missal before going to Mass.

Amongst the special features of the Children's Missal one of the most striking is this—that the Propers for each Sunday are not kept in the Missal, but separately in a special folio, and have to be inserted in blank pages in the Book of the Ordinary. Every Sunday morning, or better still on the day previous, the child has to find the right Propers and insert them—by means of coloured ribbons—in his own Missal. This involves for the child, every week, an easy but fascinating and highly instructive research in the Liturgical Year; and Dr. Montessori has invented a special kind of Liturgical Calendar to facilitate this work.

The various Propers have also their own particular features. For instance, the Epistle is actually printed in handwriting script in the form of a letter to "My dear Brethren," and signed by "Paul" or "Peter," etc.

Another charming feature of the Children's Missal—which also involves a certain activity of the child—relates to the Commemoration of the Departed. Before going to Mass the child writes down on a prepared card the names of those of his family, or friends, whom he specially wishes to remember at Mass, and inserts this slip into a blank space in his Missal in the prayer, "Memento etiam, Domine," where the names are to be mentioned. Similarly also for the Commemoration of the Living.

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The Children's Missal adheres strictly to the Liturgical text. Its whole aim and object is to help the child in taking a real part in the Mass without distractions. For this reason there are no illustrations, for "the child sees before him the fact itself."

The second part of Dr. Montessori's lecture dealt with an explanation of the Liturgical Year, and the best means of presenting to the child the different Liturgical seasons and their significance. Both these subjects are dealt with more fully in booklets which will appear in due course—to be called, respectively, "The Guide" (to the Children's Missal), and "The Life in Christ"—a study of the Liturgical Year.

In proposing a vote of thanks to Dr. Montessori, the Bishop of Pella said that what had struck him most about the lecture was that Dr. Montessori always worked on the principle of making the child use his own mind. The child, in fact, was really teaching himself and acquiring knowledge through his own activity. This was characteristic of the work in Montessori schools in general. He had seen them in action; the children were all working away busily, each at his own occupation, "like mechanics in a workshop." His lordship said that educationists all over the world owed a debt of gratitude to Dr. Montessori, and Catholics in particular for the skill and pains which she had put at their disposal in preparing the subjects of these lectures—in helping the children to take a real part in the most solemn Sacrifice of the Altar. Catholicism and the Mass stood or fell together. He had just returned from Ireland and had realised more strongly than ever that it was the Mass which had kept the faith alive in that country. In his own name, and the names of all present, he proposed a hearty vote of thanks.

In replying to his lordship, the great Italian educationist paid a striking act of homage and loyalty to the Church. She thanked the Bishop for his presence there—itsself a sign of his paternal love for his children—and thanked him also on behalf of the children and teachers. For, she said, she knew well that even though she had worked for 20 years at this subject her work would count for nothing until responsible authorities in the Church expressed their approval and gave it their blessing.

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