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# The Education of the Child

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THE EDUCATION  
OF THE CHILD

in the Light of Anthroposophy

RUDOLF STEINER

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**PREFATORY NOTE TO THE FIRST  
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The following study forms the substance of a lecture which I gave at various places in Germany. In response to a wish—expressed in many quarters—that it should also be available in print, I have here re-cast it in essay form.

Account should be taken of the remarks which have been added as footnotes.

**RUDOLF STEINER**

## THE EDUCATION OF THE CHILD IN THE LIGHT OF ANTHROPOSOPHY

MUCH that the man of to-day inherits from generations of the past is called in question by his present life. Hence the numerous 'problems of the hour' and 'demands of the age.' How many of these are occupying the attention of the world—the Social Question, the Women's Question, the various educational questions, hygienic questions, questions of human rights, and so forth! By the most varied means, men are endeavouring to grapple with these problems. The number of those who come on the scene with this or that remedy or programme for the solution—or at any rate for the partial solution—of one or other of them, is indeed past counting. In the process, all manner of opinions and shades of opinion make themselves felt—Radicalism, which carries itself with a revolutionary air; the Moderate attitude, full of respect for existing things, yet endeavouring to evolve out of them something new; Conservatism, which is up in arms whenever any of the old institutions are tampered with. Beside these main tendencies of thought and feeling there is every kind of intermediate position.

Looking at all these things of life with deeper vision, one cannot but feel—indeed the impression forces itself upon one—that the men of our age are in the position of trying to meet the demands involved in modern life with means which are utterly inadequate. Many are setting about to

reform life, without really knowing life in its foundations. But he who would make proposals as to the future must not content himself with a knowledge of life that merely touches life's surface. He must investigate its depths.

Life in its entirety is like a plant. The plant contains not only what it offers to external life; it also holds a future state within its hidden depths. One who has before him a plant only just in leaf, knows very well that after some time there will be flowers and fruit also on the leaf-bearing stem. In its hidden depths the plant already contains the flowers and fruit in embryo; yet by mere investigation of what the plant now offers to external vision, how should one ever tell what these new organs will look like? This can only be told by one who has learnt to know the very nature and being of the plant.

So, too, the whole of human life contains within it the germs of its own future; but if we are to tell anything about this future, we must first penetrate into the hidden nature of the human being. And this our age is little inclined to do. It concerns itself with the things that appear on the surface, and thinks it is treading on unsafe ground if called upon to penetrate to what escapes external observation.

In the case of the plant the matter is certainly more simple. We know that others like it have again and again borne fruit before. Human life is present only once; the flowers it will bear in the future have never yet been there. Yet they are present within man in the embryo, even as the flowers are present in a plant that is still only in leaf. And there is a possibility of saying something about man's future, if once we penetrate beneath the surface of human nature to its real essence and being. It is only when fertilized by this deep penetration into human life, that the

various ideas of reform current in the present age can become fruitful and practical.

Anthroposophy, by its inherent character and tendency, must have the task of providing a practical conception of the world—one that comprehends the nature and essence of human life. Whether what is often called so is justified in making such a claim, is not the point; it is the real essence of Anthroposophy—and what, by virtue of its real essence, Anthroposophy can be—that here concerns us. For Anthroposophy is not intended as a theory remote from life, one that merely caters for man's curiosity or thirst for knowledge. Nor is it intended as an instrument for a few people, who for selfish reasons would like to attain a higher level of development for themselves. No, it can join and work at the most important tasks of present-day humanity, and further their development for the welfare of mankind.<sup>1</sup>

It is true that in taking on this mission, Anthroposophy must be prepared to face all kinds of scepticism and opposition. Radicals, Moderates and Conservatives in every sphere of life will be bound to meet it with scepticism. For

<sup>1</sup> It is not to be inferred that Anthroposophy has only to do with the greater questions of life. Anthroposophy, as the passage would express, is destined to afford a basis on which the solution of the greater questions may be sought; at the same time it is no less true that Anthroposophy is able to bring help to each individual person wherever he may find himself placed in life, that it can be a source whence he may draw the answers to the most everyday questions, whence he may draw comfort, strength, confidence for life and work. Anthroposophy can give strength for meeting the great life-problems, and just as surely also for meeting the immediate needs of the moment, even in the seemingly most insignificant matters of daily life.



in its beginnings it will scarcely be in a position to please any party. Its premises lie far beyond the sphere of party movements, being founded, in effect, purely and solely on a true knowledge and perception of life. If a man has knowledge of life, it is only out of life itself that he will be able to set himself his tasks. He will draw up no arbitrary programmes, for he will know that no other fundamental laws of life can prevail in the future than those that prevail already in the present. The spiritual investigator will therefore of necessity respect existing things. However great the need for improvement he may find in them, he will not fail to see, in existing things themselves, the embryo of the future. At the same time, he knows that in all things 'becoming' there must be growth and evolution. Hence he will perceive in the present the seeds of transformation and of growth. He invents no programmes; he reads them out of what is there. What he thus reads becomes in a certain sense itself a programme, for it bears in it the essence of development. For this very reason an anthroposophical insight into the being of man must provide the most fruitful and the most practical means for the solution of the urgent questions of modern life.

In the following pages we shall endeavour to prove this for one particular question—the question of Education. We shall not set up demands nor programmes, but simply describe the child-nature. From the nature of the growing and evolving human being, the proper point of view for Education will, as it were, spontaneously result.

IF we wish to perceive the nature of the evolving man, we must begin by considering the hidden nature of man as such. What sense-observation learns to know in man,

and what the materialistic conception of life would consider as the one and only element in man's being, is for spiritual investigation only one part, one member of his nature: it is his Physical Body. This physical body of man is subject to the same laws of physical existence, and is built up of the same substances and forces, as the whole of that world which is commonly called lifeless. Anthroposophical Science says, therefore: man has a physical body in common with the whole of the mineral kingdom. And it designates as the 'Physical Body' that alone in man, which brings the substances into mixture, combination, form, and dissolution by the same laws as are at work in the same substances in the mineral world as well.

Now over and above the physical body, Anthroposophical Science recognizes a second essential principle in man. It is his Life-Body or Etheric Body. The physicist need not take offence at the term 'Etheric Body.' The word 'Ether' in this connexion does not mean the same as the hypothetical Ether of Physics. It must be taken simply as a designation of what will here and now be described. In recent times it was considered a highly unscientific proceeding to speak of such an 'Etheric Body'; though this had not been so at the end of the eighteenth and in the first half of the nineteenth century. In that earlier time people had said to themselves: the substances and forces which are at work in a mineral cannot of their own accord form the mineral into a living creature. In the latter there must also be inherent a peculiar 'force.' This force they called the 'Vital Force,' and they thought of it somewhat as follows: the Vital Force is working in the plant, in the animal, in the human body, and produces the phenomena of life, just as the magnetic force is present in the magnet producing the

phenomena of attraction. In the succeeding period of materialism, this idea was set aside. People began to say: the living creature is built up in the same way as the lifeless creation. There are no other forces at work in the living organism than in the mineral; the same forces are only working in a more complicated way, and building a more complex structure.

To-day, however, it is only the most rigid materialists who hold fast to this denial of a life-force or vital force. There are a number of natural scientists and thinkers whom the facts of life have taught, that something like a vital force or life-principle must be assumed. Thus modern science, in its later developments, is in a certain sense approaching what Anthroposophical Science has to say about the life-body. There is, however, a very important difference. From the facts of sense-perception, modern science arrives, through intellectual considerations or reflections, at the assumption of a kind of vital force. This is not the method of genuine spiritual investigation which Anthroposophy adopts and from the results of which it makes its statements. It cannot often enough be emphasized how great is the difference, in this respect, between Anthroposophy and the current science of to-day. For the latter regards the experiences of the senses as the foundation for all knowledge. Anything that cannot be built up on this foundation, it takes to be unknowable. From the impressions of the senses it draws deductions and conclusions. What goes on beyond them it rejects, as lying 'beyond the frontiers of human knowledge.'

From the standpoint of Anthroposophical Science, such a view is like that of a blind man, who only admits as valid things that can be touched and conclusions that result by

deduction from the world of touch—a blind man who rejects the statements of seeing people as lying outside the possibility of human knowledge. Anthroposophy shows man to be capable of evolution, capable of bringing new worlds within his sphere by the development of new organs of perception. Colour and light are all around the blind man. If he cannot see them, it is only because he lacks the organs of perception. In like manner Anthroposophy asserts: there are many worlds around man, and man can perceive them if only he develops the necessary organs. As the blind man who has undergone a successful operation looks out upon a new world, so by the development of higher organs man can come to know new worlds—worlds altogether different from those which his ordinary senses allow him to perceive.

Now whether one who is blind in body can be operated on or not, depends on the constitution of his organs. But the higher organs whereby man can penetrate into the higher worlds, are present in embryo in every human being. Everyone can develop them who has the patience, endurance, and energy to apply in his own case the methods described in the volume, 'Knowledge of Higher Worlds and its Attainment.'

Anthroposophical Science, then, would never say that there are definite frontiers to human knowledge. What it would rather say is that for man those worlds exist, for which he has the organs of perception. Thus Anthroposophy speaks only of the methods whereby existing frontiers may be extended; and this is its position with regard to the investigation of the life-body or etheric body, and of all that is specified in the following pages as the yet higher members of man's nature. Anthroposophy admits that the

physical body alone is accessible to investigation through the bodily senses, and that—from the point of view of this kind of investigation—it will at most be possible by intellectual deductions to surmise the existence of a higher body. At the same time, it tells how it is possible to open up a world wherein these higher members of man's nature emerge for the observer, as the colour and the light of things emerge after operation in the case of a man born blind. For those who have developed the higher organs of perception, the etheric or life-body is an object of perception and not merely of intellectual deduction.

Man has this etheric or life-body in common with the plants and animals. The life-body works in a formative way upon the substances and forces of the physical body, thus bringing about the phenomena of growth, reproduction, and inner movement of the saps and fluids. It is therefore the builder and moulder of the physical body, its inhabitant and architect. The physical body may even be spoken of as an image or expression of the life-body. In man the two are nearly, though by no means wholly, equal as to form and size. In the animals, however, and still more so in the plants, the etheric body is very different, both in form and in extension, from the physical.

The third member of the human body is what is called the Sentient or Astral Body. It is the vehicle of pain and pleasure, of impulse, craving, passion, and the like—all of which are absent in a creature consisting only of physical and etheric bodies. These things may all be included in the term: sentient feeling or sensation. The plant has no sensation. If in our time some learned men, seeing that plants will respond by movement or in some other way to external stimulus, conclude that plants have a certain power of sen-

sation, they only show their ignorance of what sensation is. The point is not whether the creature responds to an external stimulus, but whether the stimulus is reflected in an *inner* process—as pain or pleasure, impulse, desire, or the like. Unless we held fast to this criterion, we should be justified in saying that blue litmus-paper has a sensation of certain substances, because it turns red by contact with them.<sup>1</sup>

Man has therefore a sentient body in common with the animal kingdom only, and this sentient body is the vehicle of sensation or of sentient life.

We must not fall into the error of certain theosophical circles, and imagine the etheric and sentient bodies as consisting simply of finer substances than are present in the physical body. For that would be a materialistic conception of these higher members of man's nature. The etheric body is a force-form; it consists of active forces, and not of

<sup>1</sup> It is necessary to lay stress on this point, for there is in our time a great want of clearness on such matters. Many people obscure the distinction between a plant and a sentient being, because they are not clear themselves as to the real nature of sensation. If a being or thing acts in some way in response to an impression, that is made on it from without, one is not therefore justified in saying that it has a sensation of the impression. It can only be said to have sensation if it *experiences* the impression *in its inner life*, that is to say, if there is a kind of inward reflection of the outer stimulus. The great advances of Natural Science in our time, for which the true spiritual investigator has the highest admiration, have none the less brought about a lack of clearness with regard to higher concepts. Some biologists do not know what sensation is, and hence they ascribe it to a being that has none. What they understand by sensation, they may well ascribe even to non-sentient beings. What the Anthroposophical Science must understand by sensation is altogether different.



matter. The astral or sentient body is a figure of inwardly moving, coloured, luminous pictures. The astral body deviates, both in shape and size, from the physical body. In man it presents an elongated ovoid form, within which the physical and etheric bodies are embedded. It projects beyond them—a vivid, luminous figure—on every side.<sup>1</sup>

Now man possesses a fourth member of his being; and this fourth member he shares with no other earthly creature. It is the vehicle of the human 'I,' of the human Ego. The little word 'I'—as used, for example, in the English language—is a name essentially different from all other names. To anyone who ponders rightly on the nature of this name, there is opened up at once a way of approach to a perception of man's real nature. All other names can be applied, by all men equally, to the thing they designate. Everyone can call a table 'table,' and everyone can call a chair 'chair'; but it is not so with the name 'I.' No one can use this name to designate another. Each human being can only call himself 'I'; the name 'I' can never reach my ear as a designation of myself. In designating himself as 'I,' man has to name himself within himself. A being who can say 'I' to himself is a world in himself. Those religions which are founded on spiritual knowledge have always had a feeling for this truth. Hence they have said: With the 'I,' the 'God'—who in the lower creatures reveals himself only from without, in the phenomena of the surrounding world—begins to speak from within. The vehicle of this

<sup>1</sup> A distinction must be drawn between the experience man has of the sentient body within himself, and the perception of the sentient body by a trained seer. It is what lies open to the sentient body by a trained seer that is here referred to.

faculty of saying 'I,' of the Ego-faculty, is the 'Body of the Ego,' the fourth member of the human being.<sup>1</sup>

This 'Body of the Ego' is the vehicle of the higher soul of man. Through it man is the crown of all earthly creation. Now in the human being of the present day the Ego is by no means simple in character. We may recognize its nature if we compare human beings at different stages of development. Look at the uneducated savage beside the average European, or again, compare the latter with a lofty idealist. Each one of them has the faculty of saying 'I' to himself; the 'Body of the Ego' is present in them all. But the uneducated savage, with his Ego, follows his passions, impulses, and cravings almost like an animal. The more highly developed man says to himself, 'Such and such impulses and desires you may follow,' while others again he holds in check or suppresses altogether. The idealist has developed new impulses and new desires in addition to those originally present. All this has taken place through the Ego working upon the other members of the human being. Indeed, it is this which constitutes the special task of the Ego. Working outward from itself, it has to ennoble and purify the other members of man's nature.

In the human being who has reached beyond the condition in which the external world first placed him, the lower members have become changed to a greater or lesser degree

<sup>1</sup> The reader must not take offence at the expression 'Body of the Ego.' It is certainly not used in any grossly material sense. But in Anthroposophical Science there is no other possibility than to use the words of ordinary language; and as these are ordinarily applied to material things, they must, in their application to a spiritual science, first be translated into the spiritual.

under the influence of the 'Ego.' When man is only beginning to rise above the animal, when his 'Ego' is only just kindled, he is still like an animal so far as the lower members of his being are concerned. His etheric or life-body is simply the vehicle of the formative forces of life, the forces of growth and reproduction. His sentient body gives expression to those impulses, desires, and passions only, which are stimulated by external nature. As man works his way up from this stage of development, through successive lives or incarnations, to an ever higher evolution, his 'Ego' works upon the other members and transforms them. In this way his sentient body becomes the vehicle of purified sensations of pleasure and pain, refined wishes and desires. And the etheric or life-body also becomes transformed. It becomes the vehicle of the man's habits, of his more permanent bent or tendency in life, of his temperament and of his memory. A man whose Ego has not yet worked upon his life-body, has no memory of the experiences he goes through in life. He just lives out what Nature has implanted in him.

This is what the growth and development of civilization means for man. It is a continual working of his Ego upon the lower members of his nature. The work penetrates right down into the physical body. Under the influence of the Ego, the whole appearance and physiognomy, the gestures and movements of the physical body, are altered. It is possible, moreover, to distinguish the way in which the different means of culture or civilization work upon the several members of man's nature. The ordinary factors of civilization work upon the sentient body and imbue it with pleasures and pains, with impulses and cravings, of a different kind from what it had originally. Again, when the

human being is absorbed in the contemplation of a great work of art, his etheric body is being influenced. Through the work of art he divines something higher and more noble than is offered by the ordinary environment of his senses, and in this process he is forming and transforming his life-body. Religion is a powerful means for the purification and ennobling of the etheric body. It is here that the religious impulses have their mighty purpose in the evolution of mankind.

What we call 'conscience' is nothing else than the outcome of the work of the Ego on the life-body through incarnation after incarnation. When man begins to perceive that he ought not to do this or that, and when this perception makes so strong an impression on him that the impression passes on into his etheric body, 'conscience' arises.

Now this work of the Ego upon the lower members may either be something that is proper to a whole race of men; or else it may be entirely individual, an achievement of the individual Ego working on itself alone. In the former case, the whole human race collaborates, as it were, in the transformation of the human being. The latter kind of transformation depends on the activity of the individual Ego alone and of itself. The Ego may become so strong as to transform, by its very own power and strength, the sentient body. What the Ego then makes of the Sentient or Astral Body is called 'Spirit-Self' (or by an Eastern expression, 'Manas'). This transformation is wrought mainly through a process of learning, through an enriching of one's inner life with higher ideas and perceptions.

Now the Ego can rise to a still higher task, and it is one that belongs quite essentially to its nature. This happens when not only is the astral body enriched, but the etheric

or life-body transformed. A man learns many things in the course of his life; and if from some point he looks back on his past life, he may say to himself: 'I have learned much.' But in a far less degree will he be able to speak of a transformation in his temperament or character during life, or of an improvement or deterioration in his memory. Learning concerns the astral body, whereas the latter kinds of transformation concern the etheric or life-body. Hence it is by no means an unhappy image if we compare the change in the astral body during life with the course of the minute hand of a clock, and the transformation of the life-body with the course of the hour hand.

When man enters on a higher training—or, as it is called, occult training—it is above all important for him to undertake, out of the very own power of his Ego, this latter transformation. Individually and with full consciousness, he has to work out the transformation of his habits and his temperament, his character, his memory. . . . In so far as he thus works into his life-body, he transforms it into what is called in anthroposophical terminology, 'Life-Spirit' (or, as the Eastern expression has it, 'Budhi').

At a still higher stage man comes to acquire forces whereby he is able to work upon his physical body and transform it (transforming, for example, the circulation of the blood, the pulse). As much of the physical body as is thus transformed is 'Spirit-Man' (or, in the Eastern term, 'Atma').

Now as a member of the whole human species or of some section of it—for example, of a nation, tribe, or family—man also achieves certain transformations of the lower parts of his nature. In Anthroposophical Science the results of this latter kind of transformation are known by the following

names. The astral or sentient body, transformed through the Ego, is called the Sentient Soul; the transformed etheric body is called the Intellectual Soul; and the transformed physical body the Spiritual Soul. We must not imagine the transformations of these three members taking place one after another in time. From the moment when the Ego lights up, all three bodies are undergoing transformation simultaneously. Indeed, the work of the Ego does not become clearly perceptible to man until a part of the Spiritual Soul has already been formed and developed.

FROM what has been said, it is clear that we may speak of four members of man's nature: the Physical Body, the Etheric or Life-Body, the Astral or Sentient Body, and the Body of the Ego. The Sentient Soul, the Intellectual Soul, and the Spiritual Soul, and beyond these the still higher members of man's nature—Spirit-Self, Life-Self, Spirit-Man—appear in connexion with these four members as products of transformation. Speaking of the vehicles of the qualities of man, it is in fact the first four members only which come into account.

It is on these four members of the human being that the educator works. Hence, if we desire to work in the right way, we must investigate the nature of these parts of man. It must not be imagined that they develop uniformly in the human being, so that at any given point in his life—the moment of birth, for example—they are all equally far developed. This is not the case; their development takes place differently in the different ages of a man's life. The right foundation for education, and for teaching also, consists in a knowledge of these laws of development of human nature.



Before physical birth, the growing human being is surrounded on all sides by the physical body of another. He does not come into independent contact with the physical world. The physical body of his mother is his environment, and this body alone can work upon him as he grows and ripens. Physical birth indeed consists in this, that the physical mother-body, which has been as a protecting sheath, sets the human being free, thus enabling the environment of the physical world thenceforward to work upon him directly. His senses open to the external world, and the external world thereby gains that influence on the human being which was previously exercised by the physical envelope of the mother-body.

A spiritual understanding of the world, as represented by Anthroposophy, sees in this process the birth of the physical body, but not as yet of the etheric or life-body. Even as man is surrounded, until the moment of birth, by the physical envelope of the mother-body, so until the time of the change of teeth—until about the seventh year—he is surrounded by an etheric envelope and by an astral envelope. It is only during the change of teeth that the etheric envelope liberates the etheric body. And an astral envelope remains until the time of puberty, when the astral or sentient body also becomes free on all sides, even as the physical body became free at physical birth and the etheric body at the change of teeth.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To raise the objection that the child has memory and so forth before the change of teeth, or that he has the faculties connected with the astral body before puberty, would argue a misunderstanding of this passage. We must clearly understand that the etheric body, and the astral body too, are present from the beginning, only that they are within their

Thus, Anthroposophical Science has to speak of three births of the human being. Until the change of teeth, certain impressions intended for the etheric body can as little reach it as the light and air of the physical world can reach the physical body so long as this latter is resting in the mother's womb.

Before the change of teeth takes place, the free life-body is not yet at work in man. As in the body of the mother the physical body receives forces which are not its own, while at the same time it gradually develops its own forces within

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protecting envelopes. It is, indeed, the protecting envelope which enables the etheric body, for example, to evolve and manifest the qualities of memory very evidently before the change of teeth. But the physical eyes, too, are already present before birth, beneath the protecting envelope of the mother's womb. In the embryo the eyes are protected, and the external physical sunlight must not work upon their development. In exactly the same sense, external education must not endeavour to effect a training, or influence the moulding, of the memory before the change of teeth. If, however, we simply give it nourishment and do not try as yet to develop it by external measures, we shall see how the memory unfolds in this period, freely and of its own accord.

It is the same with those qualities of which the astral body is the bearer. Before the age of puberty one must supply them with nourishment, always bearing in mind, however, that the astral body, as explained above, still lies beneath a protecting envelope. It is one thing before puberty to nurture the seeds of development already inherent in the astral body; it is another thing after puberty to expose the now independent astral body to those influences in the outer world which it can receive and work upon, unprotected by the surrounding envelope. The distinction is certainly a subtle one; but without entering into it one cannot understand what education really is.

the protecting sheath of the mother's womb, so it is with the forces of growth until the change of teeth. During this first period the etheric body is only developing and moulding its own forces, conjointly with those—not its own—which it has inherited. Now while the etheric body is thus working its way into liberation, the physical body is already independent. The etheric body, as it liberates itself, develops and works out what it has to give to the physical body. The 'second teeth,' i.e. the human being's own teeth, taking the place of those which he inherited, represent the culmination of this work. They are the densest things embedded in the physical body, and hence they appear last, at the end of this period.

From this point onward, the growth of man's physical body is brought about by his own etheric body alone. But this etheric body is still under the influence of an astral body which has not yet escaped from its protecting sheath. At the moment when the astral body too becomes free, the etheric body concludes another period of its development; and this conclusion finds expression in puberty. The organs of reproduction become independent because from this time onward the astral body is free, no longer working inwards, but openly and without integument meeting the external world.

Now just as the physical influences of the external world cannot be brought to bear on the yet unborn child—so until the change of teeth one should not bring to bear on the etheric body those forces which are, for it, what the impressions of the physical environment are for the physical body. And in the astral body the corresponding influences should not be given play until after puberty.

Vague and general phrases—the harmonious develop-

ment of all the powers and talents in the child,' and so forth—cannot provide the basis for a genuine art of education. Such an art of education can only be built up on a real knowledge of the human being. Not that these phrases are incorrect, but that at bottom they are as useless as it would be to say of a machine that all its parts must be brought harmoniously into action. To work a machine you must approach it, not with phrases and truisms, but with real and detailed knowledge. So for the art of education it is a knowledge of the members of man's being and of their several development which is important. We must know on what part of the human being we have especially to work at a certain age, and how we can work upon it in the proper way. There is of course no doubt that a truly realistic art of education, such as is here indicated, will only slowly make its way. This lies, indeed, in the whole mentality of our age, which will long continue to regard the facts of the spiritual world as the vapourings of an imagination run wild, while it takes vague and altogether unreal phrases for the result of a realistic way of thinking. Here, however, we shall unreservedly describe what will in time to come be a matter of common knowledge, though many to-day may still regard it as a figment of the mind.

With physical birth the physical human body is exposed to the physical environment of the external world. Before birth it was surrounded by the protecting envelope of the mother's body. What the forces and fluids of the enveloping mother-body have done for it hitherto, must from now onward be done for it by the forces and elements of the external physical world. Now before the change of teeth in the seventh year, the human body has a task to perform upon itself which is essentially different from the tasks of

all the other periods of life. In this period the physical organs must mould themselves into definite shapes. Their whole structural nature must receive certain tendencies and directions. In the later periods also, growth takes place; but throughout the whole succeeding life, growth is based on the forms which were developed in this first life-period. If true forms were developed, true forms will grow; if misshapen forms were developed, misshapen forms will grow. We can never repair what we have neglected as educators in the first seven years. Just as Nature brings about the right environment for the physical human body before birth, so after birth the educator must provide for the right physical environment. It is the right physical environment alone, which works upon the child in such a way that the physical organs shape themselves aright.

There are two magic words which indicate how the child enters into relation with his environment. They are: Imitation, and Example. The Greek philosopher Aristotle called man the most imitative of creatures. For no age in life is this more true than for the first stage of childhood, before the change of teeth. What goes on in his physical environment, this the child imitates, and in the process of imitation his physical organs are cast into the forms which then become permanent. 'Physical environment' must, however, be taken in the widest imaginable sense. It includes not only what goes on around the child in the material sense, but everything that takes place in the child's environment—everything that can be perceived by his senses, that can work from the surrounding physical space upon the inner powers of the child. This includes all the moral or immoral actions, all the wise or foolish actions, that the child sees.

It is not moral talk or prudent admonitions that influence the child in this sense. Rather is it what the grown-up people do visibly before his eyes. The effect of admonition is to mould the forms, not of the physical, but of the etheric body; and the latter, as we saw, is surrounded until the seventh year by a protecting etheric envelope, even as the physical body is surrounded before physical birth by the physical envelope of the mother-body. All that has to evolve in the etheric body before the seventh year—ideas, habits, memory, and so forth—all this must develop 'of its own accord,' just as the eyes and ears develop within the mother-body without the influence of external light. . . . What we read in that excellent educational work—Jean Paul's 'Levana' or 'Science of Education'—is undoubtedly true. He says that a traveller will have learned more from his nurse in the first years of his life, than in all his journeys round the world. The child, however, does not learn by instruction or admonition, but by imitation. The physical organs shape their forms through the influence of the physical environment. Good sight will be developed in the child if his environment has the right conditions of light and colour, while in the brain and blood-circulation the physical foundations will be laid for a healthy moral sense if the child sees moral actions in his environment. If before his seventh year the child sees only foolish actions in his surroundings, the brain will assume such forms as adapt it also to foolishness in later life.

As the muscles of the hand grow firm and strong in performing the work for which they are fitted, so the brain and other organs of the physical body of man are guided into the right lines of development if they receive the right impression from their environment. An example will best

illustrate this point. You can make a doll for a child by folding up an old napkin, making two corners into legs, the other two corners into arms, a knot for the head, and painting eyes, nose and mouth with blots of ink. Or else you can buy the child what they call a 'pretty' doll, with real hair and painted cheeks. We need not dwell on the fact that the 'pretty' doll is of course hideous, and apt to spoil the healthy æsthetic sense for a lifetime. The main educational question is a different one. If the child has before him the folded napkin, he has to fill in from his own imagination all that is needed to make it real and human. This work of the imagination moulds and builds the forms of the brain. The brain unfolds as the muscles of the hand unfold when they do the work for which they are fitted. Give the child the so-called 'pretty' doll, and the brain has nothing more to do. Instead of unfolding, it becomes stunted and dried up. If people could look into the brain as the spiritual investigator can, and see how it builds its forms, they would assuredly give their children only such toys as are fitted to stimulate and vivify its formative activity. Toys with dead mathematical forms alone, have a desolating and killing effect upon the formative forces of the child. On the other hand everything that kindles the imagination of living things works in the right way. Our materialistic age produces few good toys. What a healthy toy it is, for example, which represents by movable wooden figures two smiths facing each other and hammering an anvil. The like can still be bought in country districts. Excellent also are the picture-books where the figures can be set in motion by pulling threads from below, so that the child itself can transform the dead picture into a representation of living action. All this brings about a living mobility

of the organs, and by such mobility the right forms of the organs are built up.

These things can of course only be touched on here, but in future Anthroposophy will be called upon to give the necessary indications in detail, and this it is in a position to do. For it is no empty abstraction, but a body of living facts which can give guiding lines for the conduct of life's realities.

A few more examples may be given. A 'nervous,' that is to say excitable child, should be treated differently as regards environment from one who is quiet and lethargic. Everything comes into consideration, from the colour of the room and the various objects that are generally around the child, to the colour of the clothes in which he is dressed. One will often do the wrong thing if one does not take guidance from spiritual knowledge. For in many cases the materialistic idea will hit on the exact reverse of what is right. An excitable child should be surrounded by and dressed in the red or reddish-yellow colours, whereas for a lethargic child one should have recourse to the blue or bluish-green shades of colour. For the important thing is the complementary colour, which is created within the child. In the case of red it is green, and in the case of blue orange-yellow, as may easily be seen by looking for a time at a red or blue surface and then quickly directing one's gaze to a white surface. The physical organs of the child create this contrary or complementary colour, and it is this which brings about the corresponding organic structures that the child needs. If the excitable child has a red colour around him, he will inwardly create the opposite, the green; and this activity of creating green has a calming effect. The organs assume a tendency to calmness.



There is one thing that must be thoroughly and fully recognized for this age of the child's life. It is that the physical body creates its own scale of measurement for what is beneficial to it. This it does by the proper development of craving and desire. Generally speaking, we may say that the healthy physical body desires what is good for it. In the growing human being, so long as it is the physical body that is important, we should pay the closest attention to what the healthy craving, desire and delight require. Pleasure and delight are the forces which most rightly quicken and call forth the physical forms of the organs.

In this matter it is all too easy to do harm by failing to bring the child into a right relationship, physically, with his environment. Especially may this happen in regard to his instincts for food. The child may be overfed with things that completely make him lose his healthy instinct for food, whereas by giving him the right nourishment the instinct can be so preserved that he always wants what is wholesome for him under the circumstances, even to a glass of water, and turns just as surely from what would do him harm. Anthroposophical Science, when called upon to build up an art of education, will be able to indicate all these things in detail, even specifying particular forms of food and nourishment. For Anthroposophy is realism, it is no grey theory; it is a thing for life itself.

Thus the joy of the child, in and with his environment, must be reckoned among the forces that build and mould the physical organs. Teachers he needs with happy look and manner, and above all with an honest unaffected love. A love which as it were streams through the physical environment of the child with warmth may literally be said to 'hatch out' the forms of the physical organs.

The child who lives in such an atmosphere of love and warmth and who has around him really good examples for his imitation, is living in his right element. One should therefore strictly guard against anything being done in the child's presence that he must not imitate. One should do nothing of which one would then have to say to the child, 'You must not do that.' The strength of the child's tendency to imitate can be recognized by observing how he will paint and scribble written signs and letters long before he understands them. Indeed, it is good for him to paint the letters by imitation first, and only later learn to understand their meaning. For imitation belongs to this period when the physical body is developing; while the meaning speaks to the etheric, and the etheric body should not be worked on till after the change of teeth, when the outer etheric envelope has fallen away. Especially should all learning of speech in these years be through imitation. It is by hearing that the child will best learn to speak. No rules or artificial instruction of any kind can be of good effect.

For early childhood it is important to realize the value of children's songs, for example, as means of education. They must make a pretty and rhythmical impression on the senses; the beauty of sound is to be valued more than the meaning. The more living the impression made on eye and ear, the better. Dancing movements in musical rhythm have a powerful influence in building up the physical organs, and this too should not be undervalued.

With the change of teeth, when the etheric body lays aside its outer etheric envelope, there begins the time when the etheric body can be worked upon by education from without. We must be quite clear what it is that can work



upon the etheric body from without. The formation and growth of the etheric body means the moulding and developing of the inclinations and habits, of the conscience, the character, the memory and temperament. The etheric body is worked upon through pictures and examples—i.e. by carefully guiding the imagination of the child. As before the age of seven we have to give the child the actual physical pattern for him to copy, so between the time of the change of teeth and puberty we must bring into his environment things with the right inner meaning and value. For it is from the inner meaning and value of things that the growing child will now take guidance. Whatever is fraught with a deep meaning that works through pictures and allegories, is the right thing for these years. The etheric body will unfold its forces if the well-ordered imagination is allowed to take guidance from the inner meaning it discovers for itself in pictures and allegories—whether seen in real life or communicated to the mind. It is not abstract conceptions that work in the right way on the growing etheric body, but rather what is seen and perceived—not indeed with the outward senses, but with the eye of the mind. This seeing and perceiving is the right means of education for these years.

For this reason it matters above all that the boy and girl should have as their teachers persons who can awaken in them, as they see and watch them, the right intellectual and moral powers. As for the first years of childhood Imitation and Example were, so to say, the magic words for education, so for the years of this second period the magic words are Discipleship and Authority. What the child sees directly in his educators, with inner perception, must become for him authority—not an authority compelled by force, but

one that he accepts naturally without question. By it he will build up his conscience, habits and inclinations; by it he will bring his temperament into an ordered path. He will look out upon the things of the world as it were through its eyes. Those beautiful words of the poet, 'Every man must choose his hero, in whose footsteps he will tread as he carves out his path to the heights of Olympus,' have especial meaning for this time of life. Veneration and reverence are forces whereby the etheric body grows in the right way. If it was impossible during these years to look up to another person with unbounded reverence, one will have to suffer for the loss throughout the whole of one's later life. Where reverence is lacking, the living forces of the etheric body are stunted in their growth.

Picture to yourself how such an incident as the following works upon the character of a child. A boy of eight years old hears tell of someone who is truly worthy of honour and respect. All that he hears of him inspires in the boy a holy awe. The day draws near when for the first time he will be able to see him. With trembling hand he lifts the latch of the door behind which will appear before his sight the person he reveres. The beautiful feelings such an experience calls forth are among the lasting treasures of life. Happy is he who, not only in the solemn moments of life but continually, is able to look up to his teachers and educators as to his natural and unquestioned authorities.

Beside these living authorities, who as it were embody for the child intellectual and moral strength, there should also be those he can only apprehend with the mind and spirit, who likewise become for him authorities. The outstanding figures of history, stories of the lives of great men and women: let these determine the conscience and the



direction of the mind. Abstract moral maxims are not yet to be used; they can only begin to have a helpful influence, when at the age of puberty the astral body liberates itself from its astral mother-envelope.

In the history lesson especially, the teacher should lead his teaching in the direction thus indicated. When telling stories of all kinds to little children before the change of teeth, our aim cannot be more than to awaken delight and vivacity and a happy enjoyment of the story. But after the change of teeth, we have in addition something else to bear in mind in choosing our material for stories; and that is, that we are placing before the boy or girl pictures of life that will arouse a spirit of emulation in the soul.

The fact should not be overlooked that bad habits may be completely overcome by drawing attention to appropriate instances that shock or repel the child. Reprimands give at best but little help in the matter of habits and inclinations. If, however, we show the living picture of a man who has given way to a similar bad habit, and let the child see where such an inclination actually leads, this will work upon the young imagination and go a long way towards the uprooting of the habit. The fact must always be remembered: it is not abstract ideas that have an influence on the developing etheric body, but living pictures that are seen and comprehended inwardly. The suggestion that has just been made certainly needs to be carried out with great tact, so that the effect may not be reversed and turn out the very opposite of what was intended. In the telling of stories everything depends upon the art of telling. Narration by word of mouth cannot, therefore, simply be replaced by reading.

In another connexion too, the presentation of living

pictures, or as we might say of symbols, to the mind, is important for the period between the change of teeth and puberty. It is essential that the secrets of Nature, the laws of life, be taught to the boy or girl, not in dry intellectual concepts, but as far as possible in symbols. Parables of the spiritual connexions of things should be brought before the soul of the child in such a manner that behind the parables he divines and feels, rather than grasps intellectually, the underlying law in all existence. 'All that is passing is but a parable,' must be the maxim guiding all our education in this period. It is of vast importance for the child that he should receive the secrets of Nature in parables, before they are brought before his soul in the form of 'natural laws' and the like. An example may serve to make this clear. Let us imagine that we want to tell a child of the immortality of the soul, of the coming forth of the soul from the body. The way to do this is to use a comparison, such for example as the comparison of the butterfly coming forth from the chrysalis. As the butterfly soars up from the chrysalis, so after death the soul of man from the house of the body. No man will rightly grasp the fact in intellectual concepts, who has not first received it in such a picture. By such a parable, we speak not merely to the intellect but to the feeling of the child, to all his soul. A child who has experienced this, will approach the subject with an altogether different mood of soul, when later it is taught him in the form of intellectual concepts. It is indeed a very serious matter for any man, if he was not first enabled to approach the problems of existence with his feeling. Thus it is essential that the educator have at his disposal parables for all the laws of Nature and secrets of the World.

Here we have an excellent opportunity to observe with

what effect the spiritual knowledge of Anthroposophy must work in life and practice. When the teacher comes before a class of children, armed with parables he has 'made up' out of an intellectual materialistic mode of thought, he will as a rule make little impression upon them. For he has first to puzzle out the parables for himself with all his intellectual cleverness. Parables to which one has first had to condescend have no convincing effect on those who listen to them. For when one speaks in parable and picture, it is not only what is spoken and shown that works upon the hearer, but a fine spiritual stream passes from the one to the other, from him who gives to him who receives. If he who tells has not himself the warm feeling of belief in his parable, he will make no impression on the other. For real effectiveness, it is essential to believe in one's parables as in absolute realities. And this can only be when one's thought is alive with spiritual knowledge. Take for instance the parable of which we have been speaking. The true student of Anthroposophy need not torment himself to think it out. For him it is reality. In the coming forth of the butterfly from the chrysalis he sees at work on a lower level of being the very same process that is repeated, on a higher level and at a higher stage of development, in the coming forth of the soul from the body. He believes in it with his whole might; and this belief streams as it were unseen from speaker to hearer, carrying conviction. Life flows freely, unhindered, back and forth from teacher to pupil. But for this it is necessary that the teacher draw from the full fountain of spiritual knowledge. His words and all that comes from him must receive feeling, warmth and colour from a truly anthroposophic way of thought.

A wonderful prospect is thus opened out over the whole

field of education. If it will but let itself be enriched from the well of life that Anthroposophy contains, education will itself be filled with life and understanding. There will no longer be that groping which is now so prevalent. All art and practice of education that is not continually receiving fresh nourishment from such roots as these is dry and dead. The spiritual knowledge of Anthroposophy has for all the secrets of the world appropriate parables—pictures taken from the very being of the things, pictures not first made by man, but laid by the forces of the world within the things themselves in the very act of their creation. Therefore this spiritual knowledge must form the living basis for the whole art of education.

A force of the soul on which particular value must be set during this period of man's development, is memory. The development of the memory is bound up with the moulding of the etheric body. Since the latter takes place in such a way that the etheric body becomes liberated between the change of teeth and puberty, so too this is the time for a conscious attention from without to the growth and cultivation of the memory. If what is due to the human being at this time has been neglected, his memory will ever after have less value than it might otherwise have had. It is not possible later to make up for what has been left undone.

In this connexion many mistakes may be made by an intellectual materialistic way of thought. An art of education based on such a way of thought easily arrives at a condemnation of what is mastered merely by memory. It will often set itself untiringly and emphatically against the mere training of the memory, and will employ the subtlest methods to ensure that the boy or girl commits nothing to memory that he does not intellectually understand. Yes,

and after all, how much has really been gained by such intellectual understanding? A materialistic way of thought is so easily led to believe that any further penetration into things, beyond the intellectual concepts that are as it were extracted from them, simply does not exist; and only with great difficulty will it fight its way through to the perception that the other forces of the soul are at least as necessary as the intellect, if we are to gain a comprehension of things. It is no mere figure of speech to say that man can understand with his feeling, his sentiment, his inner disposition, as well as with his intellect. Intellectual concepts are only one of the means we have to understand the things of this world, and it is only to the materialistic thinker that they appear as the sole means. Of course there are many who do not consider themselves materialists, who yet regard an intellectual conception of things as the only kind of understanding. Such people profess perhaps an idealistic or even a spiritual outlook. But in their soul they relate themselves to it in a materialistic way. For the intellect is in effect the instrument of the soul for understanding what is material.

We have already alluded to Jean Paul's excellent book on education; and a passage from it, bearing on this subject of the deeper foundations of the understanding, may well be quoted here. Jean Paul's book contains, indeed, many a golden word on education, and deserves far more attention than it receives. It is of greater value for the teacher than many of the educational works that are held in highest regard to-day. The passage runs as follows:—

'Have no fear of going beyond the childish understanding, even in whole sentences. Your expression and the tone of your voice, aided by the child's intuitive eagerness to

understand, will light up half the meaning, and with it in course of time the other half. It is with children as with the Chinese and people of refinement; the tone is half the language. Remember, the child learns to understand his own language before ever he learns to speak it, just as we do with Greek or any other foreign language. Trust to time and the connexions of things to unravel the meaning. A child of five understands the words "yet," "even," "of course," "just"; but now try to give an explanation of them—not to the child, but to his father! In the one word "of course" there lurks a little philosopher! If the eight-year-old child, with his developed speech, is understood by the child of three, why do you want to narrow down your language to the little one's childish prattle? Always speak to the child some years ahead—do not the men of genius speak to us centuries ahead in books? Talk to the one-year-old as if he were two, to the two-year-old as if he were six, for the difference in development diminishes in inverse ratio with the age. We are far too prone to credit the teachers with everything the children learn. We should remember that the child we have to educate bears half his world within him all there and ready taught, namely the spiritual half, including, for example, the moral and metaphysical ideas. For this very reason language, equipped as it is with material images alone, cannot give the spiritual archetypes; all it can do is to illumine them. The very brightness and decision of children should give us brightness and decision when we speak to them. We can learn from their speech as well as teach them through our own. Their word-building is bold, yet remarkably accurate! For instance, I have heard the following expressions used by three- or four-year-old children:—"the barreler" (for the maker of barrels)—

“the sky-mouse” (for the bat)—“I am the seeing-through man” (standing behind the telescope)—“I’d like to be a ginger-bread-eater”—“he joked me down from the chair”—“See how one o’clock it is!” . . .’

Our quotation refers, it is true, to a different subject from that with which we are immediately concerned; but what Jean Paul says about speech has its value in the present connexion also. Here too there is an understanding which precedes the intellectual comprehension. The little child receives the structure of language into the living organism of his soul, and does not require the laws of language-formation in intellectual concepts for the process. Similarly the older boy and girl must learn for the cultivation of the memory much that they are not to master with their intellectual understanding until later years. Those things are afterwards best grasped in concepts, which have first been learned simply from memory in this period of life, even as the rules of language are best learned in a language one is already able to speak. So much talk against ‘unintelligent learning by heart’ is simply materialistic prejudice. The child need only, for instance, learn the essential rules of multiplication in a few given examples—and for these no apparatus is necessary; the fingers are much better for the purpose than any apparatus,—then he is ready to set to and memorize the whole multiplication table. Proceeding in this way, we shall be acting with due regard to the nature of the growing child. We shall, however, be offending against his nature, if at the time when the development of the memory is the important thing we are making too great a call upon the intellect.

The intellect is a soul-force that is only born with puberty, and we ought not to bring any influence to bear

on it from outside before this period. Up to the time of puberty the child should be laying up in his memory the treasures of thought on which mankind has pondered; afterwards is the time to penetrate with intellectual understanding what has already been well impressed upon the memory in earlier years. It is necessary for man, not only to remember what he already understands, but to come to understand what he already knows—that is to say, what he has acquired by memory in the way the child acquires language. This truth has a wide application. First there must be the assimilation of historical events through the memory, then the grasping of them in intellectual concepts; first the faithful committing to memory of the facts of geography, then the intellectual grasp of the connexions between them. In a certain respect, the grasping of things in concepts should proceed from the stored-up treasures of the memory. The more the child knows in memory before he begins to grasp in intellectual concepts, the better.

There is no need to enlarge upon the fact that what has been said applies only for that period of childhood with which we are dealing, and not later. If at some later age in life one has occasion to take up a subject for any reason, then of course the opposite may easily be the right and most helpful way of learning it, though even here much will depend on the mentality of the person. In the time of life, however, with which we are now concerned, we must not dry up the child’s mind and spirit by cramming it with intellectual conceptions.

Another result of a materialistic way of thought is to be seen in the lessons that rest too exclusively on sense-perception. At this period of childhood, all perception must be



spiritualized. We ought not to be satisfied, for instance, with presenting a plant, a seed, a flower to the child merely as it can be perceived with the senses. Everything should become a parable of the spiritual. In a grain of corn there is far more than meets the eye. There is a whole new plant invisible within it. That such a thing as a seed has more within it than can be perceived with the senses, this the child must grasp in a living way with his feeling and imagination. He must, in feeling, divine the secrets of existence. The objection cannot be made that the pure perception of the senses is obscured by this means; on the contrary, by going no further than what the senses see, we are stopping short of the whole truth. For the full reality consists of the spirit as well as the substance; and there is no less need for faithful and careful observation when one is bringing all the faculties of the soul into play, than when only the physical senses are employed. Could men but see, as the spiritual investigator sees, what desolation is wrought in soul and body by an instruction that rests on external sense-perception alone, they would never insist upon it so strongly as they do. Of what good is it in the highest sense, that children should have shown to them all possible varieties of minerals, plants and animals, and all kinds of physical experiments, if something further is not bound up with the teaching of these things; namely, to make use of the parables which the sense-world gives, in order to awaken a feeling for the secrets of the spirit?

Certainly a materialistic way of thought will have little use for what has here been said; and this the spiritual investigator understands only too well. But he also knows that the materialistic way of thought will never give rise to a really practical art of education. Practical as it appears to

itself, materialistic thought is unpractical when the need is to enter into life in a living way. In face of actual reality, materialistic thought is fantastic,—though indeed to the materialistic thinker the anthroposophical teachings, adhering as they do to the facts of life, cannot but appear fantastic. There will no doubt be many an obstacle yet to overcome before the principles of Anthroposophy, which are indeed born out of life itself, can make their way into the art of education. It cannot be otherwise. The truths of this spiritual science cannot but seem strange as yet, and unaccustomed to many people. None the less, if they are true indeed, they will become part of our life and civilization.

ONLY the teacher who has a conscious and clear understanding of how the several subjects and methods of education work upon the growing child, can have the tact to meet every occasion that offers, in the right way. He has to know how to treat the several faculties of the soul—Thinking, Feeling and Willing,—so that their development may react on the etheric body, which in this period between the change of teeth and puberty can attain more and more perfect form under the influences that affect it from without.

By a right application of the fundamental educational principles, during the first seven years of childhood, the foundation is laid for the development of a strong and healthy *Will*. For a strong and healthy will must have its support in the well-developed forms of the physical body. Then, from the time of the change of teeth onwards, the etheric body which is now developing must bring to the physical body those forces whereby it can make its forms

firm and inwardly complete. Whatever makes the strongest impression on the etheric body, works also most powerfully towards the consolidation of the physical body. The strongest of all the impulses that can work on the etheric body, come from the feelings and thoughts by which man divines and experiences in consciousness his relation to the Everlasting Powers. That is to say, they are those that come from religious experience. Never will a man's will, nor in consequence his character, develop healthily, if he is not able in this period of childhood to receive religious impulses deep into his soul. How a man feels his place and part in the universal Whole,—this will find expression in the unity of his life of will. If he does not feel himself linked by strong bonds to a Divine-spiritual, his will and character must needs remain uncertain, divided and unsound.

The world of *Feeling* is developed in the right way through the parables and pictures we have spoken of, and especially through the pictures of great men and women, taken from History and other sources, which we bring before the children. A correspondingly deep study of the secrets and beauties of Nature is also important for the right formation of the world of feeling. Last but not least, there is the cultivation of the sense of beauty and the awakening of the artistic feeling. The musical element must bring to the etheric body that rhythm which will then enable it to sense in all things the rhythm otherwise concealed. A child who is denied the blessing of having his musical sense cultivated during these years, will be the poorer for it the whole of his later life. If this sense were entirely lacking in him, whole aspects of the world's existence would of necessity remain hidden from him. Nor are

the other arts to be neglected. The awakening of the feeling for architectural forms, for moulding and sculpture, for lines and for design, for colour harmonies—none of these should be left out of the plan of education. However simple life has to be under certain circumstances, the objection can never hold that the circumstances do not allow of anything being done in this direction. Much can be done with the simplest means, if only the teacher himself has the right artistic feeling. Joy and happiness in living, a love of all existence, a power and energy for work—such are among the lifelong results of a right cultivation of the feeling for beauty and for art. The relationship of man to man, how noble, how beautiful it becomes under this influence! Again, the moral sense, which is also being formed in the child during these years through the pictures of life that are placed before him, through the authorities to whom he looks up,—this moral sense becomes assured, if the child out of his own sense of beauty feels the good to be at the same time beautiful, the bad to be at the same time ugly.

*Thought* in its proper form, as an inner life lived in abstract concepts, must remain still in the background during this period of childhood. It must develop as it were of itself, uninfluenced from without, while life and the secrets of nature are being unfolded in parable and picture. Thus between the seventh year and puberty, thought must be growing, the faculty of judgement ripening, in among the other experiences of the soul; so that after puberty is reached, the youth may become able to form quite independently his own opinions on the things of life and knowledge. The less the direct influence on the development of judgement in earlier years, and the more a good indirect influence is brought to bear through the development of the

other faculties of soul, the better it is for the whole of later life.

The spiritual knowledge of Anthroposophy affords the true foundations, not only for spiritual and mental education, but for physical. This may be illustrated by reference to children's games and gymnastic exercises. Just as love and joy should permeate the surroundings of the child in the earliest years of life, so through physical exercises the growing etheric body should experience an inner feeling of its own growth, of its ever increasing strength. Gymnastic exercises, for instance, should be of such a nature that each movement, each step, gives rise to the feeling within the child: 'I feel growing strength in me.' This feeling must take possession of the child as a healthy sense of inner happiness and ease. To think out gymnastic exercises from this point of view requires more than an intellectual knowledge of human anatomy and physiology. It requires an intimate intuitive knowledge of the connexion of the sense of happiness and ease with the positions and movements of the human body—a knowledge that is not merely intellectual, but permeated with feeling. Whoever arranges such exercises must be able to experience in himself how one movement and position of the limbs produces a happy and easy feeling of strength, another, as it were, an inner loss of strength. . . . To teach gymnastics and other physical exercises with these things in view, the teacher will require what Anthroposophy alone—and above all, the anthroposophical habit of mind—can give. He need not himself see into the spiritual worlds at once, but he must have the understanding to apply in life only what springs from spiritual knowledge. If the knowledge of Anthroposophy were applied in practical spheres like education, the idle talk that this know-

ledge has first to be proved would quickly disappear. Whoever applies it correctly, will find that the knowledge of Anthroposophy proves itself in life by making life strong and healthy. He will see it to be true in that it holds good in life and practice, and in this he will find a proof stronger than all the logical and so-called scientific arguments can afford. Spiritual truths are best recognized in their fruits and not by what is called a proof, be this ever so scientific; such proof can indeed hardly be more than logical skirmishing.

With the age of puberty the astral body is first born. Henceforth the astral body in its development is open to the outside world. Only now, therefore, can we approach the child from without with all that opens up the world of abstract ideas, the faculty of judgement and independent thought. It has already been pointed out, how up to this time these faculties of soul should be developing—free from outer influence—within the environment provided by the education proper to the earlier years, even as the eyes and ears develop, free from outer influence, within the organism of the mother. With puberty the time has arrived when the human being is ripe for the formation of his own judgements about the things he has already learned. Nothing more harmful can be done to a child than to awaken too early his independent judgement. Man is not in a position to judge until he has collected in his inner life material for judgement and comparison. If he forms his own conclusions before doing so, his conclusions will lack foundation. Educational mistakes of this kind are the cause of all narrow onesidedness in life, all barren creeds that take their stand on a few scraps of knowledge and are ready on this basis to condemn ideas experienced and proved by man often through long ages.



In order to be ripe for thought, one must have learned to be full of respect for what others have thought. There is no healthy thought which has not been preceded by a healthy feeling for the truth, a feeling for the truth supported by faith in authorities accepted naturally. Were this principle observed in education, there would no longer be so many people, who, imagining too soon that they are ripe for judgement, spoil their own power to receive openly and without bias the all-round impressions of life. Every judgement that is not built on a sufficient foundation of gathered knowledge and experience of soul throws a stumbling-block in the way of him who forms it. For having once pronounced a judgement concerning a matter, we are ever after influenced by this judgement. We no longer receive a new experience as we should have done, had we not already formed a judgement connected with it. The thought must take living hold in the child's mind, that he has first to learn and then to judge. What the intellect has to say concerning any matter, should only be said when all the other faculties of the soul have spoken. Before that time the intellect has only an intermediary part to play: its business is to grasp what takes place and is experienced in feeling, to receive it exactly as it is, not letting the unripe judgement come in at once and take possession. For this reason, up to the age of puberty the child should be spared all theories about things; the main consideration is that he should simply meet the experiences of life, receiving them into his soul. Certainly he can be told what different men have thought about this and that, but one must avoid his associating himself through a too early exercise of judgement with the one view or the other. Thus the opinions of men he should also receive with the feeling power of the

soul. He should be able, without jumping to a decision or taking sides with this or that person, to listen to all, saying to himself: 'This man said this, and that man that.' The cultivation of such a mind in a boy or girl certainly demands the exercise of great tact from teachers and educators; but tact is just what anthroposophical thought can give.

All we have been able to do is to unfold a few aspects of education in the light of Anthroposophy. And this alone was our intention,—to indicate how great a task the anthroposophical spiritual impulse must fulfil in education for the culture of our time. Its power to fulfil the task will depend on the spread of an understanding for this way of thought in ever wider and wider circles. For this to come about, two things are, however, necessary. The first is that people should relinquish their prejudices against Anthroposophy. Whoever honestly pursues it, will soon see that it is not the fantastic nonsense many to-day hold it to be. We are not making any reproach against those who hold this opinion; for all that the culture of our time offers must tend on a first acquaintance to make one regard the followers of Anthroposophy as fantastic dreamers. On a superficial consideration no other judgement can be reached, for in the light of it Anthroposophy, with its claim to be a spiritual Science, will seem in direct contradiction to all that modern culture gives to man as the foundation of a healthy view of life. Only a deeper consideration will discover that the views of the present day are in themselves deeply contradictory and will remain so, as long as they are without the anthroposophical foundation. Indeed, of their very nature they call out for such foundation and cannot in the long run be without it.

The second thing that is needed concerns the healthy cultivation of Anthroposophy itself. Only when it is perceived, in anthroposophical circles everywhere, that the point is not simply to theorize about the teachings, but to let them bear fruit in the most far-reaching way in all the relationships of life,—only then will life itself open up to Anthroposophy with sympathy and understanding. Otherwise people will continue to regard it as a variety of religious sectarianism for a few cranks and enthusiasts. If, however, it performs positive and useful spiritual work, the Anthroposophical Movement cannot in the long run be denied intelligent recognition.

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