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Mother reads out her article “What a Child Should Always Remember” (*On Education*).

You say that one should have “the certitude of Truth’s final victory”. But doesn’t this certitude seem very different from, and often the very opposite of, what one teaches in ordinary life?

Yes. Generally it is believed that things always end badly in Nature. Everyone knows the story of those who have met a lamentable end after having enjoyed great success in their life; of those who had extraordinary capacities and who finally lost them; of a nation which for a long period was the model of a marvellous civilisation — the civilisation vanishes and the nation is changed into something so deplorable that one can no longer recollect what it was. It seems that the story of the earth is a story of victories followed by defeats and not of defeats followed by victories.

But in fact, whenever it is a question of universal and divine things, what is needed is the universal vision and divine understanding of things in order to know how the truth expresses itself. There is a kind of general pessimism which says that even if things begin well they end badly, that it is weakness, hypocrisy, falsehood and wickedness which always seem to have the upper hand. That is why those who see the world in their own personal dimension have said that the world is bad and that we have only to finish with it and get out of it as soon as possible. Teachers have taught this but their teaching only proves that their vision is too narrow and in the dimension of their human individuality.

In truth, the movements of Nature are like those of the tides: they advance, they recede, advance and recede; in the universal

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life and even in terrestrial life, this means a progressive advance, though apparently it is cut up by withdrawals. But these withdrawals are only an appearance, as when one draws back to spring forward. You seem to be drawing back but it is simply in order to go much farther.

You will tell me that all this is very well, but how to give a child the certitude that the truth will triumph? For, when he learns history, when he observes Nature, he will see that things don't always end well.¹

Children must be taught to see the divine manifestation in the world and not the side which ends badly.

No, if the child thinks that the Divine is different from the world, his idea that everything ends badly will be quite justified.

Children must be given the idea of divine justice.

But we know nothing about it, for this justice does not manifest in the world as it is today.

However, if one observes things a little deeply, one perceives that there is progress, that things become better and better, though apparently they do not improve. And for a consciousness seated a little higher, it is quite evident that all evil — at least what we call evil — all falsehood, all that is contrary to the

¹ In 1963, at the time this conversation was first published, Mother made the following remark:

“After all, as long as there is death, things always end badly. It is only victory over death which will make it possible for things not to end badly; that is when the return into the Inconscience will no longer be necessary to allow a new progress.

“The whole process of development, at least terrestrial development, is like that. I do not know how it happens on the other planets! Traditions say that a universe is created, then withdrawn in the *pralaya*, then a new one comes and so on; and according to them we should be the seventh universe, and being the seventh universe, we are that which will not return into *pralaya* but progress constantly without going back. It is because of this, besides, that there is in the human being this need of permanence and of an uninterrupted progress; it is because the time has come.”

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Truth, all suffering, all opposition is the result of a disequilibrium. I believe that one who is habituated to seeing things from this higher plane sees immediately that it is like that. Consequently, the world cannot be founded upon a disequilibrium, for if so it would have long since disappeared. One feels that at the origin of the universe there must have been a supreme Equilibrium and, perhaps, as we said the other day, a progressive equilibrium, an equilibrium which is the exact opposite of all that we have been taught and all that we are accustomed to call "evil". There is no absolute evil, but *an* evil, a more or less partial disequilibrium.

This may be taught to a child in a very simple way; it may be shown with the help of material things that an object will fall if it is not balanced, that only things in equilibrium can keep their position and duration.

There is another quality which must be cultivated in a child from a very young age: that is the feeling of uneasiness, of a moral disbalance which it feels when it has done certain things, not because it has been told not to do them, not because it fears punishment, but spontaneously. For example, a child who hurts its comrade through mischief, if it is in its normal, natural state, will experience uneasiness, a grief deep in its being, because what it has done is contrary to its inner truth.

For in spite of all teachings, in spite of all that thought can think, there is something in the depths which has a feeling of a perfection, a greatness, a truth, and is painfully contradicted by all the movements opposing this truth. If a child has not been spoilt by its milieu, by deplorable examples around it, that is, if it is in the normal state, spontaneously, without its being told anything, it will feel an uneasiness when it has done something against the truth of its being. And it is exactly upon this that later its effort for progress must be founded.

For, if you want to find one teaching, one doctrine upon which to base your progress, you will never find anything — or, to be more exact, you will find something else, for in accordance

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with the climate, the age, the civilisation, the teaching given is quite conflicting. When one person says, "This is good", another will say, "No, this is bad", and with the same logic, the same persuasive force. Consequently, it is not upon this that one can build. Religion has always tried to establish a dogma, and it will tell you that if you conform to the dogma you are in the truth and if you don't you are in the falsehood. But all this has never led to anything and has only created confusion.

There is only one true guide, that is the inner guide, who does not pass through the mental consciousness.

Naturally, if a child gets a disastrous education, it will try ever harder to extinguish within itself this little true thing, and sometimes it succeeds so well that it loses all contact with it, and also the power of distinguishing between good and evil. That is why I insist upon this, and I say that from their infancy children must be taught that there is an inner reality — within themselves, within the earth, within the universe — and that they, the earth and the universe exist only as a function of this truth, and that if it did not exist the child would not last, even the short time that it does, and that everything would dissolve even as it comes into being. And because this is the real basis of the universe, naturally it is this which will triumph; and all that opposes this cannot endure as long as this does, because it is That, the eternal thing which is at the base of the universe.

It is not a question, of course, of giving a child philosophical explanations, but he could very well be given the feeling of this kind of inner comfort, of satisfaction, and sometimes, of an intense joy when he obeys this little very silent thing within him which will prevent him from doing what is contrary to it. It is on an experience of this kind that teaching may be based. The child must be given the impression that nothing can endure if he does not have within himself this true satisfaction which alone is permanent.

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Can a child become conscious of this inner truth like an adult?

For a child this is very clear, for it is a perception without any complications of word or thought — there is that which puts him at ease and that which makes him uneasy (it is not necessarily joy or sorrow which come only when the thing is very intense). And all this is much clearer in the child than in an adult, for the latter has always a mind which works and clouds his perception of the truth.

To give a child theories is absolutely useless, for as soon as his mind awakes he will find a thousand reasons for contradicting your theories, and he will be right.

This little true thing in the child is the divine Presence in the psychic — it is also there in plants and animals. In plants it is not conscious, in animals it begins to be conscious, and in children it is very conscious. I have known children who were much more conscious of their psychic being at the age of five than at fourteen, and at fourteen than at twenty-five; and above all, from the moment they go to school where they undergo that kind of intensive mental training which draws their attention to the intellectual part of their being, they lose almost always and almost completely this contact with their psychic being.

If only you were an experienced observer, if you could tell what goes on in a person, simply by looking into his eyes!... It is said the eyes are the mirror of the soul; that is a popular way of speaking but if the eyes do not express to you the psychic, it is because it is very far behind, veiled by many things. Look carefully, then, into the eyes of little children, and you will see a kind of light — some describe it as candid — but so true, so true, which looks at the world with wonder. Well, this sense of wonder, it is the wonder of the psychic which sees the truth but does not understand much about the world, for it is too far from it. Children have this but as they learn more, become more intelligent, more educated, this is effaced, and you see all sorts

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of things in their eyes: thoughts, desires, passions, wickedness — but this kind of little flame, so pure, is no longer there. And you may be sure it is the mind that has got in there, and the psychic has gone very far behind.

Even a child who does not have a sufficiently developed brain to understand, if you simply pass on to him a vibration of protection or affection or solicitude or consolation, you will see that he responds. But if you take a boy of fourteen, for example, who is at school, who has ordinary parents and has been ill-treated, his mind is very much in the forefront; there is something hard in him, the psychic being has gone behind. Such boys do not respond to the vibration. One would say they are made of wood or plaster.

If the inner truth, the divine presence in the psychic is so conscious in the child, it could no longer be said that a child is a little animal, could it?

Why not? In animals there is sometimes a very intense psychic truth. Naturally, I believe that the psychic being is a little more formed, a little more conscious in a child than in an animal. But I have experimented with animals, just to know; well, I assure you that in human beings I have rarely come across some of the virtues which I have seen in animals, very simple, unpretentious virtues. As in cats, for example: I have studied cats a lot; if one knows them well they are marvellous creatures. I have known mother-cats which have sacrificed themselves entirely for their babies — people speak of maternal love with such admiration, as though it were purely a human privilege, but I have seen this love manifested by mother-cats to a degree far surpassing ordinary humanity. I have seen a mother-cat which would never touch her food until her babies had taken all they needed. I have seen another cat which stayed eight days beside her kittens, without satisfying any of her needs because she was afraid to leave them alone; and a cat which repeated more than fifty times the same

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movement to teach her young one how to jump from a wall on to a window, and I may add, with a care, an intelligence, a skill which many uneducated women do not have. And why is it thus? — since there was no mental intervention. It was altogether spontaneous instinct. But what is instinct? — it is the presence of the Divine in the genus of the species, and that, that is the psychic of animals; a collective, not an individual psychic.

I have seen in animals all the reactions, emotional, affective, sentimental, all the feelings of which men are so proud. The only difference is that animals cannot speak of them and write about them, so we consider them inferior beings because they cannot flood us with books on what they have felt.

When I was a child if I did something bad immediately I felt uneasy and I would decide never to do that again. Then my parents also used to tell me never again to do it. Why? Because I had myself decided not to do it any more.

A child should never be scolded. I am accused of speaking ill of parents! But I have seen them at work, you see, and I know that ninety per cent of parents snub a child who comes spontaneously to confess a mistake: “You are very naughty. Go away, I am busy” — instead of listening to the child with patience and explaining to him where his fault lies, how he ought to have acted. And the child, who had come with good intentions, goes away quite hurt, with the feeling: “Why am I treated thus?” Then the child sees his parents are not perfect — which is obviously true of them today — he sees that they are wrong and says to himself: “Why does he scold me, he is like me!”