

On the Real Nature of Will in the Child*

By CAROLINE VON HEYDEBRAND

To speak about the real nature of will in the child is to touch upon one of the most difficult problems in the realm of education. And yet, when we are concerned with the growing human being and his evolution, this problem must be approached. In so doing we come to matters that are deeply connected with the religious and moral life of mankind.

When we ponder upon the nature of will in the child, we are confronted by riddles so fundamental that, if we were able to solve them, we should know for the first time whether we really have or have not the right to educate children. For the capacity to educate is not by any means a matter of course—although it is frequently regarded as such. In every single child each in his own way, we are faced with the question: What is it that he *himself* wills? And if we have convinced ourselves that the human will is in essence free, we cannot help asking ourselves: In what sense have we the right to intervene in the play of this free will in the child? If, after much contemplation, we have come to the conclusion that the will is not free, that it is conditioned by the world around the human being, then again we must ask: What does education really imply? To what end, to what goal must it lead? No enigma of human existence concerns the teacher so deeply as that of the hidden forces of will in the child.

If we look for the will in its essence, in the form in which it is distinct from idea, from every element of thought, from every element of feeling, living itself out as *pure will*, we must turn to the tiny child at an age before his capacity to form ideas has evolved. In the tiny child we find, to begin with, nothing but expressions of the will; he responds to whatever happens to him with a movement of his will, with a stamping of his limbs, with laughing, cooing or screaming. The will is the first thing that faces us in the tiny child as his waking life.

But the will is also revealed in the tiny child in quite another form. It is revealed in its most wonderful manifestation as an active, creative power, a formative, shaping force. The will-working both as a divine and natural power—gives form to the organism.

In this sphere the will is active without actual connection with the *consciousness* of the child. In conjunction with a sublime wisdom, this activity of the will is perhaps more wonderful than any other manifestation of power in the whole world.

How is this will working? How can we understand it? In order to understand the nature of the forces creatively at work here, let us think of the animal. In the animal, the forces of will as creative activity are dreamlike, unconnected with conscious ideas and thought. We speak here of *instinct*,

Think of a wasp, a bird or some other animal, and of how through its senses it feels its way into the environment. It has finely developed senses—often much more finely and more one-pointedly developed than the senses of the human being. When the wasp takes hold of the substance with which it then proceeds to build its nest, it feels its way into the substance through its senses, and shapes it according to the form of its own body. It projects the 'form-forces' of its own body outwards and into the environment.

* Translated by kind permission of the author from the magazine *Zur Padagogik Rudolf Steiners*, Stuttgart, Vol. 4, No.4, now issued under the title of *Erziehungskunst*.
Author's Note.—In this article I have tried to connect lines of thought which I have been able to work out on the basis of the pedagogic wisdom of Rudolf Steiner, with experiences gained in close association with children.

In the case of the animal, where these formative activities arise from within and are projected outwards, it is not easy to make a clear distinction between what is outside, in the environment, and what is inward. We cannot, for example, think of the nest of a bird in the same way as a house built by a human being which is not really part of him. The nest and the bird belong together; they are one. The wasps or the bees and their house are one; their dwelling-place is merely a continuation outwards of their own inner, formative forces. The animal shapes the world around it with the form giving force inherent in its very being, with the force of instinct.

At a more highly spiritual stage we can observe the same thing in connection with the tiny child. The child, however, does not really project formative forces outwards, but *inwards*. These formative forces work into the organism for a much longer time than in the case of the animal, for the development of the animal's form comes to an end at a much earlier stage. The little child builds up his organs-his bones, brain, skull-from within. He builds up his own being in the mother's womb, and after birth too, during the first years of life.

A formative force is at work here, shaping and moulding the organism, but unconsciously and instinctively. The tiny child too, with his delicate senses, feels his way into the surrounding world, but he does not send his formative forces outwards. He relates himself with his environment in such a way that he takes its forces into himself and builds up his being in conformity with the play of these forces.

The tiny child is not really separate from his environment, for the workings of the environment do not come to a standstill at the boundary-line of his body. His environment provides him with the forces with which he himself builds up and shapes his organism. And then, as the child grows older, we can see him feeling his 'way into the world by lifting himself upright. His being is working so strongly in his little limbs that he can find his bearings in space. Instinctive, hidden, wisdom-filled forces of will are at work in the child when he lifts himself upright and begins to toddle.

We observe how the child, with his finer senses, feels his way into the speech of grown-up people, how he imitates this and in so doing gradually shapes and forms his own organs of speech, his own brain. By way of speech, he begins to find his way into the mental life of those around him. With delicate, spiritual senses which only begin to function *consciously* at a much higher stage-the child finds his bearings in the world around him in such a way that in conjunction with this environment he begins to develop his own being, laying down the physiological foundations of the conscious life of will in later life.

If, for a moment, we could picture ourselves doing consciously what the tiny child is thus doing unconsciously and instinctively, we should feel ourselves at a very high stage of human evolution. If the capacity to mould and shape our organism were really part of our conscious life, we should give ourselves the form that we need in order to make manifest our own most hidden forces of will and therewith fulfill our earthly tasks. If we could shape and mould ourselves as physical human beings we should consciously control and be master of our destiny.

As we observe the tiny child in this way, perceiving how he form and shapes his being by the wisdom-filled forces of the Divine Will working unconsciously within him, how he thereby provides himself with the foundation of conscious existence in the world later on, we see him as a prophet of a distant future-a future wherein the human will, working in conscious harmony with the Divine Will, will be its own master and fashion alike the body and destiny of man.

Because the child points to our own future mission in the world, we cannot do otherwise than regard him with the greatest reverence. For does he not reveal to us at his instinctive stage of development what we ourselves must achieve in a distant future?

And now, if we ask: What is it that works upon the will of the child from the side of the teacher? —we shall realize that if we want to bring the influences of education to bear upon the child, we must approach him with the very greatest discretion, tact, and respect. Only when we are constantly mindful of the working of the will forces which are both divine and natural and transcend the range of our own will and our own knowledge, only when we realize how the little child is feeling his way into his environment in order to take from it the forces which then shape his being by instinctive activity—only then is our task, as a teacher, clearly before us. The child will imitate us. He imitates what the grown-up person does out of his forces of will. It is only our highest and most truly moral forces that can work in a healthy way upon the child at this age of his life.

Admonition and preaching make no real effect upon the child. What *does* influence him, however, is a gesture, say of gratitude, made by a grown-up person. The child is influenced not by the uttered word but by the attitude of soul expressed, for instance, in the folding of the hands in reverence. At this age, then the *gesture* is the really effective means of education. We stand before the child not as patterns but as actors, doers.

This instinctive life of the child remains in the unconscious, for he obviously has no consciousness of how the bones are being articulated, nor of how his liver, kidneys, heart are taking on their respective forms. The first element to enter the consciousness of the tiny child while his life of soul is gradually awakening, the first element that emerges from his bodily life to become *inward* in the realm of soul, is *impulse*.

When the tiny child is hungry or thirsty, *sensation* is associated with the bodily processes. As the first indication of a conscious life of will, he experiences a form of feeling that is bound up with his bodily nature.

We know how manifold are the impulses which reveal themselves in the growing human being. These impulses are still deeply connected with the body that is taking shape out of the fluid-organism. The organism seems to burst into bud from all that is moving in the body in the breathing, circulating blood, the streaming fluids of metabolism, the lymph. That which emerges little by little from the living movement and warmth and is laid hold of by the instinctive, formative force, is the partially rigidifying structure of the human body. But the impulse that is experienced semi-consciously by the tiny child presses out from the very depths of the organism, where life is weaving in the fluid element and has not yet become rigid in form. Just as the leaves and blossom of a plant unfold in rhythmic sequence, in conformity with natural law, so too in the child's life of impulse there is an urge for rhythmic repetition. This is the reason why there must be regular rhythm in the nourishment of the tiny child. It is in nourishment above all that the vital importance of rhythm in the life of the tiny child is brought home to us.

This life of impulse in the child, at first so firmly bound up with the body, is gradually metamorphosed into experience that is more essentially connected with the life of *soul*. The processes taking place in the inner functions of the organism gradually become the foundation of the life of soul which is, of course, still bound up with the body and can only be understood in the light of the character and nature of the bodily organization.

Suppose we have in front of us a child in whom the metabolic process is sluggish and inert, the movement of the organic fluids heavy, so that inner deposits form and cause obstruction. —We shall observe a very definite nature of soul in such a child, which—if we must have a name for it - we

shall characterize as *melancholic*. Again, the metabolic process in another child will be so rampantly vigorous that it takes great claims upon his whole being. Secretion is copious; the child has such a sense of well-being in his own metabolic process that he is wholly given up to it. The qualities of soul in such a child *are* connected with the *phlegmatic* temperament. If the breathing of a child seems like the wings of the wind and the blood flows lightly and easily, then, regarded from the aspect of the life of soul, we have the *sanguine* temperament. And if we have a child whose blood is full of warmth and fire, then we have in front of us a *choleric* soul.

What reveals itself here as the characteristic quality of the child's being and expresses itself in manifold ways in the life of soul is of the nature of impulse. Full consciousness and control are lacking because the will is not yet free. The will reigns as a hidden force within the temperament of the child; in conformity with destiny the will brings the physiological and the psychological processes together in such a way that they adapt themselves to each other and enable the will to express itself in the form of impulse in which elements of body and soul are intermingled.

After the change of teeth the child acts out of his *feeling* and this- is directly connected with what he perceives. That is why his actions give us the impression of impulses. This, of course, is not meant in the sense of something morally wrong; it simply refers to the way in which the child expresses himself. Whatever he expresses is fraught with the element of sympathy or antipathy and out of these feelings he expresses himself—joyfully or the reverse—but always out of the feeling that arises from what he perceives. The factor of what ought to guide and determine the action.

On the other hand, when we are educating the child during the period of life between the change of teeth and puberty, we realize how the *foundations of character* are gradually developing, how step by step the permanent basis of the life of soul is taking shape and how at this age the attitude to life, the attitude of soul, the relation to the world which we have as grown-up men and women, are being laid down in germ. The permanent disposition or attitude of the soul in life takes shape during the period between the change of teeth and puberty. We can observe too, how the child's life of feeling—at first entirely of the nature of impulse—frees itself more and more from mere sensation and gradually becomes conscious. These feelings, however, may manifest in such a way and appear to be so deeply rooted in the being of the child that they bear the stamp of permanence and become the basis for later development.

This period of life is of the greatest importance for the teacher. He can now approach the child by means of speech much more effectively than was possible during the first seven years. He can speak to the soul. That upon which the teacher must place the greatest weight during this period is the cultivation of the child's life of feeling.

Rhythm is essential to the cultivation and development of the life of impulse. The importance of rhythmic life for a child cannot be over emphasized and that is why a healthy social environment at this age is of such vital significance. There is a tendency even in the growing human being today to break free from his family, but at the Elementary School age a healthy social environment is the very greatest possible blessing to the child. The social environment constituted by the family can create the rhythm that is so necessary for the child during these years of his life. Not only should the taking of food be rhythmic, but equally, everything that comes into the child's life. His whole day should be *one* rhythm of work and play, rest and activity. It is not difficult to see how much we can ease life for the child by bringing rhythm into it. At this age the child is not ready to do anything as the result of his own decisions. We do know how difficult it is to make a child do his schoolwork. Very often the difficulty exists *not* because a certain tyranny is exercised in family life. It may happen that a child at play is called in to do his work just when it seems right to the parents. It would

be far better if a definite rhythm were introduced into *everything*, so that just as food is given at certain times, the child gets up and is put to bed at definite hours, has definite times for his work and little duties.

It is, of course, very important not only with tiny children but also with children at school, to observe the way in which the will is expressing itself as an *organic* impulse. We must observe the life of impulse that is *individual to every child*. The days have long since passed away when children were made to eat what they did not like! This is all to the good, for it means much to the child when grown-up people pay attention to what he *likes* to eat and observe how his bodily impulses express themselves. A hidden will lives in these impulses—a will that often knows better than the parents, indeed often better than the doctor, what is actually happening in the inner being of the child.

It is extraordinarily interesting and instructive, to parents and teachers alike, to observe a child from the point of view of his tastes in eating. There are children who like to eat sweet things, others who like sour, and others who like both. Some are exceedingly fond of sour gherkins. I know children who will suck the juice of a whole lemon, who like nothing better than to drink the vinegar in a salad! Parents very often regard this as reprehensible or unhealthy. It used to be considered unhealthy for the child to eat a great deal of sugar and he would be 'punished' by being deprived of sweets after meals. So many children love sweets! Very interesting types can be observed. There are people who when they were little were always to be found with their thumbs in their mouths, who when they grew older preferred to drink out of a bottle rather than out of a cup, and who were constantly found rolled up under the stairs or on a sofa, sucking sweets! It is useless to preach morals or speak of naughtiness, or resort to the explanations of psycho-analysis. What *is* important is to discover the causes of these peculiarities in the child.

Teachers will find that children who like eating sour gherkins have a tendency to be dreamy and phlegmatic; a great deal passes them by and it is by no means easy to make them respond livingly to what they are being taught. Children who are very fond of vinegar or lemon - juice, lack the power of concentration; they cannot direct their attention steadily to anything. If parents consider that it is an unhealthy sign to want to drink vinegar, they ought also to set about finding out the real cause of this impulse and try to see whether it can be dealt with through the life of *soul* in the child. If for instance, we succeed in finding some means in education of helping the child so that he learns to *concentrate*, then possibly, in time, he will of himself stop drinking the vinegar from the salad spoon. If this happens, it is a proof that we have found the means in education of so working upon the soul-nature that this impulse need no longer work itself out in the body. There is a correspondence between the power of greater concentration, which unfolds in the child, and the astringent, contractive nature of acids.

Children who are weak in their life of soul, who cannot unfold any real consciousness of personality, who are ailing and have no strong 'I' feeling, belong to the type who suck their thumbs and like eating sweets, who have a habit of lying rolled up like a ball, chewing at their nails and fingers. They try to enclose themselves within their own being and to generate an inner force of their own by putting their fingers in their mouth, and instead of stretching out their limbs, draw them back.

When a grown-up person is writing something and wants to concentrate or shut himself off from outer distractions, he will very often put his penholder or pencil in his mouth. It is a curious trick, but it indicates that he needs to 'circuit' himself, to prevent his forces from streaming outwards. The same need is often apparent in the weak, delicate child, when he has a habit of chewing something for a long time. Many children, indeed, will chew a handkerchief or their own hair. As they do this, a

glandular secretion takes place in the body and in this is enhanced organic activity the inner impulses are strengthened. It is not good simply to scold the child or snatch the handkerchief away from his mouth. It is far better to try to make the child healthy and strong in his soul, to treat him medically and by educational means.

So far as the life of a child is concerned, the task of the teacher at the outset is to lay the foundation of feelings which give rise to a certain basic attitude to life. Parents and teachers very often *presuppose* the existence of right feelings in the child. Again and again one hears parents say that their child lacks all sense of reverence to duty. Such a statement is really without point if it goes no further. An apple-tree does not spring from the ground of itself but must be grown from a seedling; similarly, feelings of duty, gratitude, humility and respect are not there of themselves but must be cultivated and developed in the child by the grown-up people around him and with the same care and love they expend on a growing plant. In the cultivation of the life of feeling it is important that education shall not take the form of admonition but that it shall lead the child-inasmuch as he lives in an environment that is a kind of model for him-to habit and custom. In later life we often find that habits and customs become rigid and inflexible. This, however, need not be the case if the germs of healthy habits, healthy customs, healthy relationships between human beings even in the most trivial affairs of life are laid down in childhood.

Healthy habits and customs which, in the child, must be deeply rooted in his sub-conscious life, arise when he can see them in the grown-up person, and that is why we must take care that everything we do can be a worthy model for the child. The attitude of soul in the grown-up person which expresses itself as moral habits and as tact, works upon the child at this age. Children never react to what happens *once*, but only to what is *repeated*. Just as an artist 'repeats' when he 'practices' so does the child long to express himself in actions that are repeated again and again. His life of will is thereby strengthened and cultivated in the right way.

From the investigations of Rudolf Steiner we learn that the life of will in the human being is intimately connected with the metabolic system. The will works *not* by way of the so-called motor nerves, but by way of the blood. But if the process of metabolism is to take place in the human being in a healthy way, a rhythm of hunger and appeasement of hunger is essential. A human being has to eat regularly and continuously, not once and for always! Exactly the same thing applies to the life of will. The life of will is not strengthened by the fact that the child perceives something once; it can only be strengthened by constant action and by observing this I constant action in other human beings. Moreover the action must be accented by the element of feeling; love, devotion and reverence must be implicit in it. When this attitude is the very life-blood in the soul of a grownup person, the child feels that warmth pervades and nourishes his own soul, and then his life of soul can unfold and develop in a healthy way.

If this happens, impulses in the child as he grows older will develop into a life of soul that no longer bears so strongly the character of impulse, is no longer affected so deeply by rhythms as it is in the tiny child, but becomes more and more conscious and gradually extricates itself from the bodily life. Wishes, passions, desires and whims begin to make themselves manifest. There is nothing more interesting than to observe between the change of teeth and the onset of puberty, how the child's life of feeling is being transformed. There is a kind of innocence, a flower-like purity about every expression of feeling to which the child of this age gives vent, even when he is naughty. At the age of 12 or 13, this innocence is gradually lost, and desires that were never before present *in this form* begin to make their appearance.

When the will expresses itself in desires, this means that it is not free from but still connected

with the bodily nature. The will manifests, nevertheless, with the character of conscious soul-life, and with creative power. The desires are strong and forceful when they are aroused. Unpleasant discoveries are often in store for us in connection with growing children and we are astonished at the suddenness and power with which these desires express themselves. But this should not shock us any more than the screaming of babies, for all that matters is how these forces can be changed. It is a wonderful thing that just when the life of soul assumes the character of conscious desire-nature, the awakening forces of *thought* begin to shine into the active life of desires that is now expressing itself in the child. When the waves of the life of soul are beating restlessly and threaten to intensify to storm, the power that can lull the storm and the waves is also there.

And now there awakens in the child the power he needs at this age of life, namely, the capacity to find his bearings in his own world of soul, as master of the inner experiences that may come to him.

One is surprised to find how strongly the faculty of thinking, when it awakens in the child at about the age of 13 or 14, is still bound up with the element of feeling. The thinking is permeated with feeling and looks with astonishment and wonder at the world and its laws to which it is now capable of applying the faculty of logical understanding. If, as teachers, we realize this, we know where the correctives in education lie and we can exert a perfectly legitimate influence upon the child's unfolding life of will. But this again is only possible if we ourselves bring to the child the element of feeling to meet the conscious life of soul that is awakening in the child. Education (in the full sense of the word) is not a healthy process if it is achieved in some way apart from the actual teaching. That is why it is so infinitely tragic in our days to see the *art* of teaching gradually being lost, especially in the West. Teaching is seldom regarded as an art; indeed it is often considered more valuable if the child 'teaches himself' instead of being taught.

It is an illusion to think that it is right to allow the child to apply the faculty of self-instruction at an age when psychical and bodily development is by no means sufficiently mature. The art of education and teaching has as its most significant task of all precisely at the age of physiological maturity, when strong, pure forces of feeling must be brought as a counterbalance and as a means of purification to meet the life of desires arising in the child.

Rudolf Steiner once said that a lesson ought never to come to an end without it having been possible for the children to have at least one hearty laugh or also to be really sad. There should be a strong interplay and expansion of feelings. Of outstanding importance is the cultivation of elements of astonishment and wonder for in this way the teacher gives to the soul the food that will ripen it for later knowledge. Things about which the child has at some later time *wondered* will interest him. Later on he will learn to love them and want to understand them. It is a great mistake to imagine that human beings can know or understand anything without loving or reverencing it. Something that is *known* without the element of love entering it can only bring to light partial truth, not the whole truth.

What innumerable questions arise in the child when he begins to marvel at all that surrounds him in the world! At the age of thirteen or fourteen the subject matter of the teaching should be handled in such a way that it is constantly arousing fresh wonder and surprise in the children. Very often it is the deepest problems of humanity about which the children are wondering and the answers to which we may have postponed as long as we can. The questions put by children are so interesting! Once the power of thinking is awake it approaches the deepest and most vital problems quite of itself. Children will ask questions such as: Is the world infinite and without end, can it come to an end. What is there behind the sky, did the world ever have a beginning, can one imagine it ceasing to

be? And so on, and so on.

Children are always putting such questions, which are really purely philosophical. We may try to protect ourselves from them because we feel incapable of answering. Moreover it would not be right to enter into discussions and arguments. But we can pay attention to such questions and little by little let them be answered by the world that is being revealed to the children, by the art of teaching, and by what great minds have thought about them.

It would be of great significance to our civilization if teachers were to think of themselves as artists whose task it is to shape and mold the material of their lessons. This is something that will never be conveyed to a child by books from which he himself has to learn.

By the time the dull forces of will have worked themselves out of the form of instinctive impulse to the point where the now gradually awakening forces of thought are leading the human being to knowledge that makes him capable of acting out of free will. His perceptions and experiences lead him to knowledge, which can be transformed, into conscious decisions of the will. The half conscious life of the will gradually combines with the awakening life of thought. We have then the *right* to educate, for the fusion of thought and will does not come about of itself but only when the human being in his early years has been led in a healthy way through wonder and astonishment to have interest in and love for the world, when the ripened faculty of thought combines with the life of the will. For us, as teachers, it is all essential to bear in mind the *free* human being of the future, to realize that although the child is not yet free, he is fundamentally and by his very nature destined for freedom. There are aspects of the life of soul in the growing human being to which attention must be paid, namely the religious and essentially ethical life whereby he relates himself to the Divine. What happens here is conditioned by destiny and in destiny it is not for others to intervene.

The child will grow on in a healthy way towards his freedom if the mood of soul in those around him is filled with the warmth of truly religious feeling. He will not be healthy and free in his soul if forms of dogma are imposed upon him in his early years. It will make the greatest possible difference if a child has found his soul warmed by the reverence, devotion and piety in his environment instead of having a definite conception of the world presented to him in the form of cut-and-dried principles. He cannot really experience these principles in his soul and they will hamper his free development. We must always be careful that the growing human being before us is allowed, out of a ripening love for the world and out of the forces of the knowledge coming to him from widening experience, to arrive freely at his view of the world.

The forming of the relation of human being to human being is a process that must be handled with equal delicacy. There are many parents today who feel, quite rightly, that the child at school must not be forced into friendships. Others again try to coerce their children to strike up friendship with certain other children. The relation between one human being and another is either determined by destiny or freely sought. To indicate to the child imaginatively that he must free himself from narrow friendships in order with openheartedness to find and help other human beings, is far better than to persuade him into making some definite acquaintance.

Nor ought we to have to force the child to humiliate himself before other people—as used to be the custom. A great deal of harm to his development may be caused thereby. It is often much better to be tolerant and leave it to the child to reconcile himself with others, to ask their pardon or the like, than to force him to this. The relationships between one human being and another must always be treated with the greatest delicacy.

Rudolf Steiner spoke many times of something that is, of fundamental importance in

education, namely, the fact that everything living in the will of man is directed *forwards*. Just as the course of evolution is in the forward direction, so does the will lead onwards to the future. There is something remarkable about every act of human will. Something remains that is not finished or completed. The will never lives itself out as completely and fully as a thought. In every act of will something remains over which we do not fully see through and which makes us feel: 'I have done this or that but would like to do it again, I would like to do it differently, better still.' The point here is not the idea or the picture in the mind, but the 'temper' of soul which invariably arises when we have done something. We may have done the very best we can and yet there is an unsatisfied feeling which is not always based upon the fact that we would have *liked* to do the thing perfectly. In every act of will it can be observed that something is pressing forward to a new deed, a different deed. —A *wish* is there, removed from any element of passion or desire—a pure wish to do something differently, to allow the power of new creation to express itself. This wish is laid hold of by an inner, spiritual force, which forms and elaborates what is thus living without definition in the human being. An inner picture of what will at some time be a new deed, does not necessarily rise to the level of consciousness. But Rudolf Steiner has indicated that the evolutionary path of the human soul is such that this picture of future deeds will become part of the conscious life of man, that in times to come the 'thou shalt' will no longer be spoken by the abstract voice of conscience, but our consciousness will be enfilled by the picture of what we are to do as compensation, maybe, for a failure or unrighteous deed.

This is not yet a conscious process within us. Nonetheless we are aware of these forces when we reach out for ideals, when we strive to accomplish something at the moment beyond our reach. Often we feel that we are *incapable* of realizing our ideals that they are waiting for a future when the basis upon which their realization is possible will be actually there, in earthly and bodily conditions. The human organization as a whole and the form which destiny assumes in one earthly life, often make it impossible for us to carry through achievements we have set before ourselves as right. And at this point in our experience we return once more to the beginning, seeking a divine force working so strongly that it can transform our very organism and make it capable of fulfilling what we have resolved. It is often the case that external circumstances hinder us from being able to right a wrong because, for example, we may never meet a human being again in this earthly life. But in the life after death our will finds the spiritual force which shapes and moulds our being, until in Spirit, soul and body we are equal to those tasks which point forward to a phase of evolution in the far future and to which we were not equal in our earthly life.

Whenever we have to do with the life of will, we must realize that a wish is there, seeking already for the New. The child who does something we regard as wrong bears within the hidden depths of his being the germ which points forward to a future when he will make amends for the wrong he has committed. And so in every form of punishment or scolding it is important not to hark back to the past and remain there. We must not drive the child back again into what has already happened but rather call up those forces that are striving him towards the future.

Rudolf Steiner said to us once that in the reports which we give to our children, we should not criticize but *characterize*. We are criticizing when we say to the child abruptly: Your writing is bad. This is altogether negative. We are characterizing when we describe what the child is doing, in such a way that he can find something that will carry him on to the future. For example, we may say: 'The letters you write are sometimes above the line and sometimes below it.' The child will then have an opportunity of realizing what he must do in the future. If we merely criticize he has no such opportunity. We help him in his striving to bear his life of will into the future and to continue the

work of developing his being, if we let forces flow towards his own formulative force, if instead of preaching we tell him stories, showing him by means of *pictures*, how he ought to act. By doing this we are helping the spiritual force within him to form an inner picture of what should happen in the future.

Rudolf Steiner emphasized again and again that we should not try to work morally upon the child by reproofing him. Rather we should work with his *own* formative forces, acting as deputy for him in shaping what ought to happen. If we do this we shall be working with the child's own good genius who is striving to lead the hidden forces of the will to future tasks that are specifically his own. We come into such close union with the genius of the child that he seems to speak to us; and then, we ourselves act *not* out of our own will but with the spiritual power which, as the true being of the child, is setting him to his earthly tasks.

The stars shine down upon us bright and clear. Their light is cold as the light we bear in our life of thought—it is light that illumines but cannot warm us. The Earth upon which we stand conceals in the depths a darkling fire. The fire that is raging in the interior depths of the Earth does not give forth light but only heat. Thus burns the darkling force of will in our inner being, in instinct, in urge, in unpurified desire. In the Sun, the dear, radiant light of the stars becomes aglow with warmth and illuminates the dark fire of Earth. Light and warmth are made one in the Sun. This Sun force works in the power with which we, as teachers, meet the will in the child when we try to let it unfold in such a way that, illumined by the pure light of living thoughts, it can become of itself that warmth-giving, sun like power of love of which the healthy development of mankind and the Earth today stands in such sore need.