

will has in determining our most fundamental convictions. These are seldom matters of coercive knowledge; they are the fruit of action and of faith as well as of intellect. Every teacher of young people in the doubting years should be familiar with William James' great essay on *The Will to Believe*.

*Fourth*, by remembering and helping young people to see that eccentricity is in itself no virtue. Individuality is precious; and personal convictions are worth the travail they cost. But individuality can be fully realized only in social relation; and one may base upon grounds that are personal, convictions that are the common heritage of the race. Youth, not fully understanding this, is sometimes tempted to mistake individualistic self-will for individuality, eccentricity for independence. Edward Rowland Sill has put the truth of the matter in verses that should be better known:

"Doubting Thomas and loving John  
Behind the others walking on:—

'Tell me now, John, dare you be  
One of the minority?  
To be lonely in your thought,

Never visited or sought,  
Shunned with secret shrug, to go  
Through the world esteemed its foe:  
To be singled out and hissed,  
Pointed at as one unblessed,  
Warned against in whispers faint  
Lest the children catch a taint:  
To bear off your titles well—  
Heretic and infidel?  
If you dare, come now with me,  
Fearless, confident, and free.'

"Thomas, do you dare to be  
Of the great majority?  
To be only, as the rest,  
With Heaven's common comforts blessed:  
To accept, in humble part,  
Truth that shines in every heart:  
Never to be set on high  
Where the envious curses fly:  
Never name or fame to find,  
Still outstripped in soul and mind,  
To be hid, unless to God,  
As one grass-blade in the sod  
Underfoot with millions trod?  
If you dare, come with us, be  
Lost in love's great unity."

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## Discovering the Scholar's Possibilities

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A scholar's possibilities! What a thought! And how soon we must grasp it and get busy in relation to it. For the child, the scholar, presents an unparalleled opportunity, and, unless we are alert, that opportunity has come and gone for ever. From the baby in the cradle to the child with a name and a personality, then the boy in knickerbockers and hair cropped close, going to the public school, then the high school boy, and then the student in college or the young man in business and—first thing we know, he is married! And it all seems but a day. The boy is a man in no time. Then, if nobody has discovered him, and reached out after him and moulded him, what will his future be? And what may the community or the world not lose in consequence?

All this makes it worth while to say a word about discovering the child, and with special application to the Sunday School teacher's part in this discovery. How is the teacher to make this discovery of the scholar's possibilities? Well, it is no easy matter. He must plan the work, and work the plan. A few suggestions are here offered.

1. *Make the scholar your friend.* Do this from the outset. Let him see that you like him, trust him, are interested in him, and

expect much of him. Do everything possible to put him at his ease in your presence. Make friendship the basis of all your dealings with him. Jesus succeeded best in his instructions with those who were his friends. Avoid the impression that the teacher is just for an hour on Sunday. As Jesus spent much time with his disciples, going with them to their homes, to picnics, and for vacations and boat trips, so do you. Enter into their pleasures and the whole programme of their interests on week days, and remember that your object as a teacher is not to fill an appointment, but to influence lives, to shape character.

A successful teacher whom I know once said to me, "I have tried to be a kind of elder brother to my class of boys." A very wise attitude, I thought. I know a young man who is a most successful teacher because he meets often with his boys, joins in their games, and is interested in all that interests them. He has the knack of turning the conversation towards religion and Christ in a way that is natural, interesting, and telling. The boys soon see that religion is a thing for every day, and not a bit forbidding after all. Be an all round friend because you love your scholars. Continuous contact counts. It is reinforced