

A Serious Mistake in Child-Study.

THE child-study movement is already a manifold blessing, and promises much more. But its leaders at the present time are making a deduction which is a blunder so harmful that its general adoption would turn the child-study movement into a curse instead of a blessing. Let it be emphasized that it is purely a deduction from confused reasoning, and not a discriminating induction, which has been heretofore the general method of the child-study.

This astonishing deduction is that the child is not capable of accepting the personal Christ before the age of fourteen or fifteen years. The reason given—for there are no specific cases adduced—is that the child himself does not develop complete personality until that period.

But this is confusing a strictly philosophical sense of personality then coming into consciousness with the practical ability to know and love persons. As well may we say that men cannot reason until they thoroughly know the laws of major and minor premise, the syllogism and the "figures" of the beautiful science of logic, or that one cannot see clearly until he knows both the nature of light and all about physiology. True enough is it that the later scientific study corrects, amplifies, and brings confidence to thought and feeling, but human activities cannot wait for the philosopher to lead off.

Let us stand by inductive child-study. Observe the child and see how his entire world begins with persons. At first the mother's face and form is the whole universe the baby knows; then he recognizes the other persons in the home, and very early distinguishes outsiders. As soon as there is any consciousness it clings to and loves persons. It knows persons before things or thoughts. We are asked to teach children simply ethical rules of conduct and general ideas of right and wrong! Not to present the personal Saviour because the child cannot define or appreciate personality! But every primary teacher knows that children do sincerely love Jesus. The mother knows that the child loves her, a person; that the child knows and loves its father. And from the good father on earth to loving the heavenly Father is an easy

step which every child in primary Sunday schools make take.

The full consciousness of individuality at about fifteen years of age defines personal powers and possibilities to the young man, and sets out, also, other individuals, thus bringing about supreme or exclusive love for one person either as chum or lover, and then a personal responsibility emerges fully. But a real and great love for persons is the first natural feeling of a human being, and it may be directed to include Christ in the life of the smallest child.

Do and Not Do.

In this age of enlarged personal liberty even Sunday School teachers dislike just a little being told exactly what they should and what they should not do. It is therefore all the more refreshing to find, every now and then, some one speaking "as with authority" and breaking away entirely from vague generalities and inconclusive discussions, giving in a nutshell definite and practical suggestions which if followed will do much to bring about definite results. The following "Do and Not Do" suggestions are well worth implicit following:

Things a Teacher Should Do: Prepare the lesson carefully. Know before beginning a lesson just what he intends to teach. Have in mind always the salvation of his pupils. Visit every pupil at least once a year. When the class is disorderly, wait quietly for order. When obliged to reprove, always speak gently, kindly, and firmly. Keep his class-book regularly. Be in his class five minutes before the opening of the session. Study the mental and spiritual condition of each pupil, that he may help them in his teaching. Remember that an ounce of practice is worth a pound of advice. Teach lovingly and faithfully for Jesus' sake.

Things a Teacher Should Not Do: Use slang. Preach instead of teach. Come unprepared to the class. Neglect to pray before coming to class. Be offended when another is praised or preferred to himself. Despair of any pupil's conversion. Neglect to visit the ill or the absent. Use tobacco. Attend the theatre. Dance. Countenance extravagance in dress.