

"THE TEACHER'S FAITH."

*By Rev. W. J. Clark.*

He said: I think perhaps it would have been no mistake at this concluding session of the Convention to close with the ringing words of Dr. Henderson's address in regard to the movement which lies so close to the heart of the Christian Church, and with the sweet notes that are even now echoing in your ears. However, according to the programme and according to promise, I have still a few words to say to you. If I were to ask you what the great object of all Sabbath School work is, I presume there would not be many to quarrel with such an answer as this, That it is to bring the children nearer to God himself. That definition perhaps includes all that is aimed at in your teaching and working week by week, and year by year. It is needful indeed that you should give much attention to method, that each particular department of the Sunday School should be expounded by experts in such work, and that you, teachers and officers, should go fully armed to the great task. And yet I cannot blunder when I say that if you rest content with expert methods and with well-organized machinery you will fail most surely in the accomplishment of that object at which you aim. In all work we touch somewhat upon the border of mystery. Every man who toils at his bench, every worker in iron or steel or wood must subject himself to the mysterious laws that prevail in the natural world; but his task is plain in comparison with that undertaken by men and women who toil in the mysterious regions of the spirits of little children, or of the spirits of grown men and women. I think that the longer one lives in this world, and the larger his experience, the more will he feel doubtful of his fitness for this spiritual warfare, for the forces that war against us are cunning with long experience. There is a pessimism that sometimes lays hold upon us when we see the problems that a Christian civilization has to face. I would abate no jot or tittle from the description given us to-night of the magnificent victories of Christian civilization. But that is one side. It is right that such a side should be presented to us, and it was not too highly colored; but it is only one side; and we have to acknowledge that in the very midst of this Christian civilization there are new forces against which we must war. Our boys and girls are not going to sit all the time in the Sabbath School, and listen to the Sabbath School teacher; but they have to go out to face the world, they have to meet its problems and give some answer to them, or the problems will vanquish them, and they will lose their faith. And so I say that men or women, no matter how well they may be equipped for this task, will fail if they are content with such equipment as man's cunning can devise and man's thoughtfulness can produce. There must be something more than that, and it is of