

Vision of Belshazzar.

The King was on his throne,
The straps thronged the hall,
A thousand bright lamps shone
O'er that high festival
A thousand cups of gold,
In Judah's domed dome
Jehovah's scepter held,
The goddess' heathen's wine

In that same hour and hall,
The fingers of a hand
Came forth against the wall,
And wrote us if on sand
The fingers of a man—
A solitary hand
Along the letters ran,
And traced them like a wand

The monarch saw, and shook,
And bade no more rejoice;
All bloodless waved his look,
And tremulous his voice.
"Let the men of lore appear,
The wisest of the earth,
And expound the words of feat,
Which mar our royal mirth."

Chaldean's seers are good,
But here they have no skill
And the unknown letters stood
Unfold and awful still.
And Babel's men of age
Are wise and deep in lore;
But now they were not sage,
They saw—but knew no more.

A captive in the land,
A stranger and a youth,
He heard the king's command,
He saw that writing's truth
The lamps around were bright,
The prophecy in view;
He read it on that night—
The morrow proved it true.

"Belshazzar's grave is made,
His kingdom passed away,
He, in the balance weighed,
Is light and worthless clay
The shroud, his robe of state;
His canopy, the sky.
The Mele is at his gate,
The Persian on his throne."

Does It Pay?

They had a Sunday-school Festival the other day in Scrambleton. Mr. Slocum from another church was present, and while everybody else was beaming with joy, he counted the candles and the varied decorations, the number of children present, and the gifts, and calculated what the affair cost at seventy five cents a head. The next day in his office, for he is president of a Savings Bank, he was rejoicing with the cashier over the large dividend of a certain railroad company, of which he is a director, and determining how many thousands to invest in a new Colorado Silver Mine Company, when Miss Earnest came in to collect a bill for the tuition of the three young Slocums in her day-school. Mr. S. at once spoke of the scene of the night before, for Miss Earnest is a teacher in that Sunday-school, and expressed himself very plainly as to the needless expenditure. "I have been in the Sunday-school forty years," said he, "and was a superintendent twenty years; and I can conduct a school for less than fifty dollars a year. The old-fashioned Bible and Catechism are good enough for me. All this money for lesson papers and concert exercises and all this stuff doesn't pay."

"Mr. Slocum," replied Miss Earnest, "do you conduct your business as you did forty years ago? Have you gained all your real estate, and your bank and railroad stocks, in proportion to an investment of fifty dollars per year? Or do you not believe that if men would employ their business talent to the Lord's work, He would bless them just as freely as He does in secular affairs?"

"Well, well—perhaps so; but that is not the point. The point is, does a Sunday-school need anything more than Bibles and Catechisms, and a place to meet in? If you can prove to me that it does, I will agree to buy a library for our Sunday school. But you must give me your proof in writing."

The challenge was promptly accepted, and in due time the following paper was sent to Mr. Slocum:—

HOW TO MAKE IT PAY.

Make large investments if you expect large returns. Of the unbounded amount of prayer, faith, and study needed for a successful school, I need not speak to one of such experience. The challenge which I accept has reference to the money principle involved, upon which point you, as a successful business man, ought to be enlightened. The question is, What besides Bibles and Catechisms will pay in the Sunday-school?

It will pay to keep your Sunday-school out of a basement or a back room. Let God's pure sunlight and fresh air come in. Don't expect children to pray and praise where a dog would be overcome with sleep. Have a bright, cozy room, with little seats for an infant class, easy of access and well-ventilated. The Sunday-school should have a separate building, with rooms for Bible classes, training class, infant class, reading-room for teachers, and the whole adapted for social gathering of school and parents with pastor and officers of the church, and always room and welcome for the stranger.

Don't have blank, bare walls.

If home has a strong hold on young affections for the influence of pure and elevating pictures, so much the more should the Sabbath home be made beautiful. Let the pictured charm of sacred story there speak through the eye to the heart.

Have illuminated texts so arranged that their beautiful colours and holy words will be gilded upon the soul. If a heathen philosopher had the golden rule in letters of pure gold on his study walls, should not Christians paint the inspired text on the heart by every embellishment of art?

Have maps in variety; superior ones, too; not little indistinct muddles without form or comeliness, but those so large and clear that all may have a distinct idea of the shores and mountains of ancient story.

Have a cabinet. Have specimens of historic rock, of sacred wood; cedar from Lebanon, olive from Gethsemane, shells from Jordan and Galilee, ancient lamps and coins, sandals and robes. All these, and such as are unmistakably genuine, can be procured with money. Let the scholars see and handle them, and know that they are real, and not mentioned as the adornments of some fairy tale of ages gone by. Have some heathen idols, too, in your cabinet, and pictures of pagan worshippers performing their unmeaning ceremonies.

A library is of course expected; but let it be constantly supplied with only the best of suitable books.

Have a library for your teachers.

Those who work most in His vineyard may be rich towards God, but are oftentimes poor among men, and cannot afford an extensive library. Furnish a room in your Sunday-school building with taste, make it inviting, and place in ample book-cases encyclopedias,

commentaries, history, travels, everything which can help to explore the mines of Bible study.

Subscribe liberally for papers for your school—not those so dry the boys threaten to boil them down for herb tea—but something alive and sparkling. Don't forget to give the wee ones easy print and glowing pages. Subscribe for all your teachers for some sterling periodicals, and read the same yourself. No Egyptian task-master was ever more exacting than the public sentiment of that church or society which expects teachers to charm and instruct their children, and offers them no assistance or co-operation. Send the periodicals to your pastor, too. He probably is no richer than your teachers, and he needs to be well read in all such literature.

If you don't approve of Christmas-trees and picnics, provide something better. Let there be times when, without the restraint of school discipline, scholars, teachers, and parents may meet in unconstrained social fellowship. If all this is needed for healthful growth in the church school, much more in the mission school. The poorer the child's week day home—the better should be his Sabbath home.

A little orphan-refugee boy, one of the waifs of war who was taken to a mission-school, said, "I thought it was heaven, it was so warm, and so bright, and such happy music. I looked to find my mother."

If music is to be the language of heaven, let it be as good as possible here. Have plenty of choice books, with hymns of real devotion, and such skillful leaders and good instruments as shall secure the highest order of praise to God.

Don't have all the good singing in the church, like that congregation in the church of the Holy Innocents, which pays three thousand dollars a year for music, and have an instrument in the Sunday-school room which would drive a street organ-grinder to desperation. That is one of the schools that has been "run" (down-hill) for less than fifty dollars a year.

Have a generous fund, under proper care, in reserve for your superintendent and teachers to use. If you can trust them with the souls and characters of your children, trust them with a little money. If they find a child who does not own a Bible, let them give it one. If a special book—often a power for good—ought to be in a family, let them place it there. If any are sick, let there be angels of mercy, with means of bearing blessing and relief.

When teachers visit, let them be well armed with persuasive tracts, picture cards, and embellished Scripture texts. These are some of the ways in which large investments will bring large returns. May God open your eyes to see—your hands to work—your heart to give—and spare you to see golden dividends before many days.

Hopefully yours,

AN EARNEST TEACHER.

The new library has already been ordered for Scrambleton, and good Mr. S. says he has concluded to invest his extra thousands nearer home than Colorado. But before work is commenced on the new building for his Sunday-school, he wishes to send a copy of Miss Earnest's letter to all his Slocum relatives—and they are many and widely scattered.—*National Sunday School Teacher.*

Mado Whole.

She only touched the hem of His garment,
As to His side she stole,
Amid the crowd that gathered around Him,
And straightway she was whole.

CHORUS.

Oh, touch the hem of His garment,
And thou, too, shalt be free,
His saving power, this very hour,
Shall give new life to thee

She came in fear and trembling before Him,
She knew her Lord had come;
She felt that from Him, virtue had healed her.
The mighty-deed was done.

He turned with, "Daughter, be of good comfort,
Thy faith had made thee whole;"
And gave that passeth all understanding,
With gladness filled her soul.

Madagascar.

THROUGH the recent aggressive movements of the French, Madagascar has been brought again prominently before the world. The following furnishes some account of the island and the conversion of the Queen and many of her people:

Madagascar is an island on the south-east coast of Africa, in length about 950 miles, and in breadth, in its widest part, 350 miles, with an area of about 225,000 square miles. It is about 300 miles from Africa. It was first visited by Europeans in 1506, under Almeida, the Portuguese Viceroy of India. The population at the present time is about 2,500,000. The inhabitants of Madagascar, though living so close to Africa, are not Africans, but are allied to the Malays. Their physical appearance, habits, and language all prove this.

In the persecution of the native Christians in Madagascar, beginning in 1836, it is estimated that between sixty and eighty suffered martyrdom. Many hundreds died from privation and severe labour imposed upon them. Now Christianity triumphs. More than a thousand congregations have been formed, and a number of a thousand native agents are engaged in various kinds of Christian work. The schools are numerous; there are seven or eight hundred in connection with the London and Friends' Societies alone, and there are three Mission printing-presses at work, which issue about two hundred thousand volumes a year.

It is supposed that at least half a million avow themselves to be Christians; and the monarch and highest nobles and officers of the Government are Christian professors. Sunday, Feb. 21, 1869, the Queen and her husband were publicly baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. In September the image of the Keimulaha, the chief idol of the Malagasy, was publicly burned in the sacred village of Ambohimambola. An officer was sent to the village, who dragged the idol from its shrine, and exposed it to the people. "Whose idol is this?" he asked. "It belongs to the Queen," replied the bystanders. To which the officer made answer, "If this idol be mine, saith Ranavalona-majika, 'I need it not; let it be burned.'" This was followed by an immediate burning of all the idols throughout the central provinces, and as far as the Hova dominion was practically extended.—*Sunday Magazine.*

It is not calling your playmate names that settles a question.