

Total population of the earth.....1,306,752,000
Under Christian governments.... 685,459,411
Under non-Christian governments... 711,383,589
Total area of the earth, square miles... 52,062,470
Area of Christian governments.... 32,419,915
Area of non-Christian lands..... 19,642,555

Here we have two results: First, nearly half the population of the world is under Christian governments; second, nearly two-thirds of the earth is under the domination of Christian governments.

The Rev. Mr. Jasper and his colored colleagues of Richmond, Va., are superintending a remarkable religious revival. At Ebenezer church, recently, a little colored girl, eight years old, rose in front of the congregation and described a wonderful vision which she had had, wherein the moon was bathed in blood, and the angel Gabriel appeared in the clouds to tell her that the world was coming to an end. A waiter in one of the hotels, while entering the dining-room with a plate of stewed oysters, suddenly flung it on the floor, and raising his hands proclaimed that he had been converted there, and there. A boy of colored girls on Franklin street surrounded every passer-by, whether black or white, and urged him to repent. The factory hands in several establishments abandoned their work and shrouded in the street. While members of his flock were dancing and tumbling on the floor in a frenzy of excitement, the Brother thundered in their ears that "de sinner will be the same as a head of cabbage in a bilin' pot. The pot will keep on bilin' and the cabbage will burn, but never burn up. And you'll burn, but never burn up." The excitement continued at last accounts.

Sunday School Department.

International Bible Lessons, 1878.

May 19.—Nebuchadnezzar's Dream.—

Dan. ii. 36-45.—B.C. 603.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days." Dan. ii. 28.

INTRODUCTION.

God continued to "sanctify to the nourishment of their bodies," the simple diet that Daniel and his companions had chosen, as recorded in our last lesson; so that at the end of three years (Dan. i. 15-19) "was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore stood they before the king." In addition to their physical appearance they were favoured by God with superior mental qualifications for the honoured position they were to occupy at the court. "God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in visions and dreams." In the lesson of to-day, this "understanding in dreams" is put to its first great proof. In introducing the class to its study, the teacher will, of course, sketch briefly the narrative of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, his trouble about it, the failure of the astrologers, their imminent peril, Daniel's appearance upon the scene, the little prayer meeting with his companions, the revelation of the dream, and all the thrilling narrative leading up to the interpretation of it, as recorded in the first part of the chapter.

In the lesson we have: (1) *Four Kingdoms that Perish*; and (2) *One that Shall Stand Forever*.

FOUR KINGDOMS THAT PERISH. v. 36-43.

1. *The Kingdom of Gold*.—v. 36-38. (Chaldean Empire).

v. 36. *The dream*.—"Dreams are usually

the mere fancies of the mind during sleep, and of no account as indicating future events. But the God who made us is able to reach our minds no less while we sleep than while we are awake; and hence can determine our dreams as truly and perfectly as the succession and character of our waking thoughts. Hence He was wont in ancient times to manifest Himself to men in their dreams."

—*Covell*. "The interpretation. The dream being symbolic or representative, needed explanation, which Daniel now proceeds to give. Notice how in this verse he connects his companions with himself. "We will tell"—because it was in answer to their united prayer that the dream and its import were revealed to him. See also verse 30.

v. 37. *Thou art a king of kings*. This term in Scripture is usually applied to God alone, (See 1 Tim. vi. 15) but it was a title by which the ancient oriental kings often called themselves, and which was literally true of Nebuchadnezzar, to whom even the pharaohs of Egypt as well as many other lesser monarchs were then tributary. The God of heaven hath given, &c. "At the same time that Daniel gave him a title which might in itself have ministered to the pride of the monarch, he is careful to remind him that he held this title in virtue of no wisdom or power of his own. It was the true God who had conferred on him the sovereignty of all these extensive realms, and it was as one of the designs of this vision to show him that he held this power at His will, and that at His pleasure He should cause it to pass away."—*Barnes*. Power, and strength and glory. "Modern research has shown that Nebuchadnezzar was the greatest monarch that Babylon, or perhaps the East generally, ever produced. Nine-tenths of Babylon, and nineteen-twentieths of all the other ruins that in almost countless profusion cover the land, are composed of brick stamped with his name."—*Kimball*.

v. 38. *Made then ruler over them all*. But his empire, though of great extent, was not of long duration; for it ended with his grandson, Belshazzar, not more than twenty-three years after his death. Thou art this head of gold. As before shown, the greatness of the Chaldean Empire was associated, almost entirely with the name of Nebuchadnezzar; hence the expression "thou art." Then, the Chaldean or Babylonian empire was proverbial for its riches. Babylon was called "the golden city," (Isaiah xiv. 4); "a golden cup," (Jer. xi. 7); "abundant in treasures," (Jer. li. 13), &c., &c.

2. *The Kingdom of Silver*.—v. 39. (Medo-Persian Empire).

v. 39. *Another kingdom inferior to thee*. This was represented by "the brass and image of silver," in the image, (verse 32). "That Medo-Persia is the second kingdom appears from chapters v. 28; viii. 20. Compare 2 Chron. xxxiv. 20; Isaiah xxi. 2."—*Fausset*.

3. *The Kingdom of Brass*.—v. 39. (Macedonian Empire).

v. 39 (continued). *Of brass*. See verse 32 again. "The Greeks were celebrated for the brass armour of their warriors. Jerome fancifully thinks that the brass, as being a clear-sound, refers to the *clash* of the armor, for which Greece was famed."—*Fausset*. Over all the earth. Every school boy knows about Alexander the Great who conquered the world and then went because he could accomplish no more. He is said to have commanded, too, that he should be called "king of all the world."

4. *The Kingdom of Iron*.—v. 40-43. (Roman Empire).

v. 40. *Strong as iron, etc.* Compare this and the following verses with verse 35. It is the generally received opinion among English commentators that the *Roman Empire* is meant here; and it would certainly answer the description in verses 40-43: in its earlier history representing the strong legs of iron and in its later period of

crumbling and decay, where the barbarous nations became mixed up by intermarriages and alliances, resembling the iron mixed with clay. The whole subject of this fourth kingdom is one of intense interest and considerable speculation among those who make a study of the prophetic Scriptures; but it would be impossible to enter upon it in these brief notes. It would be necessary to trace the whole history of the Roman Empire and its divisions and sub-divisions down to the present day.

v. 42. *The toes of the feet*. These are thus named by some commentators: 1 Spain; 2 England; 3 France; 4 Portugal; 5 Austria and Bavaria; 6 Turkey in Europe; 7 Naples; 8 Sardinia; 9 Greece; 10 Belgium.

ONE KINGDOM THAT SHALL STAND FOREVER. v. 44-45.

v. 44. *In the days of these kings*. When Rome was at her prime, before the iron began to be mixed with the clay—"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." A Kingdom which shall never be destroyed, shall not be left to other people. "The dominion shall never pass away from its rightful possessor. The government shall never change hands."—*Barnes*. Shall break in pieces. Shall subdue, and bring under its influence other nations. See Rev. xi. 15. Shall stand forever. See Dan. iv. 34; Psalm cxlv, 13, etc.

v. 45. *The Stone*.—cut out, without hands. "A power not of human fashioning; a Kingdom founded by no human conqueror. The power of Christianity to destroy the idol systems of these nations was moral, not physical; but the power to evangelize the kingdoms of the earth by the preaching of Christ's gospel is vividly portrayed by this figure."—S. S. Union Notes.

THY KINGDOM COME.

May 26.—The Fiery Furnace.—Dan. iii.

21-27.—B. C. (about) 587.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"It is he, our God, whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and He will deliver us out of thine hands, O King." Dan. iii. 17.

INTRODUCTION.

There was probably an interval of about 16 years between the events of last lesson and this. The good impressions then made upon the mind of Nebuchadnezzar (chap. ii, 46, 47) had faded away to a great extent: for he who on the former occasion had been ready to worship Daniel, and had acknowledged that "of a truth your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets," now in contemptuous words demands of the companions of Daniel "Who is that God who is able to deliver you out of my hands?"

Having conquered many nations worshipping different gods, in his hope of consolidating his empire Nebuchadnezzar seems to have conceived the idea of forcing uniformity of religious worship, by compelling them all to acknowledge Bel-mero-dach, his chief deity. Many kings and rulers have found, since his day, that uniformity in religion cannot be forced."—S. S. Union Notes.

For the purpose of enforcing this uniformity an image, magnificent in proportions and outliness, was erected, and placed in a suitable position in the plain of Dura, near Babylon, where immense throngs might congregate to worship it.

The image was 90 feet high, 9 feet broad, and in form like a man. It was most probably intended to represent the god Bel or Belus, though some think that Nebuchadnezzar himself was