

## SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

## INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

## LESSON XX.

May 19, } *NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM.* { Dan. ii.  
1878. } 36-45.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets."—Verse 28.

## HOME STUDIES.

M. Dan. ii. 1-13.... The wise men sentenced to death.  
T. Dan. ii. 14-30.... Daniel before the king.  
W. Dan. ii. 31-49.... The dream interpreted.  
Th. Dan. vi. 1-28.... Daniel's vision.  
F. Ps. ii. 1-12.... The king in Zion.  
S. Isa. xxxv. 1-10.... The joyful kingdom.  
S. Isa. lxv. 17-25.... New heaven and a new earth.

## HELPS TO STUDY.

At the end of their three years' course of training, Daniel and his three friends were brought before King Nebuchadnezzar, and were found to be far superior in learning and wisdom, not only to all their companions in study, but even to all the learned and wise men among the Chaldeans. An opportunity to test their wisdom soon presented itself. One night the king had a strange and vivid dream: it was so startling that he was awakened by it, and was unable to compose himself to sleep again; and yet his confusion of mind was so great, that he could not recall the vision that had passed before his mind. Upon this, he caused all the wise men and astrologers and pretended prophets of Babylon to be summoned before him, and commanded them to show their wisdom by telling him what the dream had been, and what it meant. Of course they could not do it. They announced themselves ready to interpret the dream if the king would tell them what it was, but confessed themselves unable to say what the dream was; and, on the king's persisting in his demand, they complained that it was a piece of manifest injustice of which no king had ever been guilty. Upon this the king became very angry, and declared that they were all imposters, (which was probably very true); and, with the capricious tyranny of a despot, commanded that all the wise men in Babylon should at once be put to death. The captain of the royal guard, to whom the execution of the order was committed, immediately proceeded to the performance of his duty. As was natural, he began with the wise men connected with the royal household; but on his coming to Daniel and his friends, to put them to death, Daniel asked the reason for the sudden edict; and, on being informed of the circumstances, succeeded in obtaining a respite till he should have time to appeal to the king. On being admitted to the royal presence, he assured the king that if he would give him a little time, he would tell both the dream and its interpretation. Upon this the king commanded that the execution of his edict should be suspended for a few hours. Having obtained a short respite, Daniel hastened home, and begged his three friends to unite in prayer to the God of heaven in his behalf, that the dream and its interpretation might be revealed to him. In the course of the night, while they were thus engaged, the desired revelation was made to Daniel.

Notice four remarkable features in Daniel's conduct. He, first, returns devout thanks to God. Next he intercedes for the condemned wise men. He then assures the king that it is the only true God who has revealed it; to whose wisdom and glory he thus boldly bears witness. And, fourthly, note his modesty. Verse 30. "He is only the channel of communication. He is willing to be nothing, that God may be all in all.

He then proceeded to relate the dream, which was this: Nebuchadnezzar had seen in his sleep a colossal and splendid image of a man, standing in the midst of a great plain in which Babylon was situated: its head was of gold, its bust and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of brass, its legs of iron, and its feet of iron mixed with clay. While the king was contemplating it, he saw a stone apparently of no great size, cut out from the mountain bordering the plain, and rolled towards the image, without any visible agency of human hands; on reaching the image it began to pound and break it, beginning with its fragile feet, and continued to do so until the whole image was reduced to dust, which the wind carried away; nothing remained but the stone, which thereupon gradually increased in size till it became an immense mountain filling the whole earth. The silence of the king showed that he recognized the dream; and, without waiting for him to speak, Daniel went on to give its meaning.

## I. THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD: Verses 37-43.

The statue which the king saw was most majestic and curiously formed. It represents the course of empire, the rapid succession of great world-monarchies.

1. *The Kingdom of Gold: Verses 37, 38.*—It was Nebuchadnezzar's own. He was a king of kings. This title is given to him in Ezek. xxvi. 7, and was usual with kings of Assyria and Persia: Isa. x. 8; Ezra vii. 12. To him belonged a kingdom, which at that time ruled the whole civilized world, extending, it is said, even to Spain; power, literally, power like that of an oak; strength, irresistible might; and glory, the glory of priceless treasures and riches. He was ruler over all, both men, and the beasts and fowl: Jer. xxvii. 6; xxviii. 14. Thou, says Daniel, art this head of gold, the personification of all this glory, the mightiest of the monarchs of Babylon: Isa. xiv. 4. In Dan. vii. 4 the Babylonian empire is represented as a lion with the wings of an eagle, the union of strength with swiftness.

But Daniel would impress upon the king his dependence upon the King of Heaven, the One Living and True God, who had given him all these possessions and glory. God is in history. He rules over the nations; and lifteth up one

and pulleth down another. Amid all conflicts, let this comfort us—"The Lord reigneth."

2. *The Kingdom of Silver: Verse 39.*—After thee: This is especially significant, as the Chaldean empire began to show signs of decay very soon after the death of Nebuchadnezzar. His successors proved utterly incapable of conducting the affairs of so vast an empire; the vigor of the nation was exhausted by luxury; and in twenty-three years after his death the hardy soldiers of Cyrus conquered his capital and put an end to his dynasty. So suddenly does God bring to naught man's greatest schemes.—**Another Kingdom:** The second great Oriental kingdom was that of the Medes and Persians, who, under Cyrus the Great, overthrew the Chaldeans, B.C. 538, and established an empire, which at its height embraced one hundred and twenty provinces, from India to Ethiopia, and from the Bosphorus to the Caspian. It rose to its culmination under Darius Hystaspes, B.C. 522, began its decline under Xerxes, his successor, the Ahasuerus of Scripture, and finally was destroyed by Alexander at the battle of Arbela, B.C. 331. The two-fold character that is here indicated—for every symbol in the Bible has its counterpart in history and in fact—viz., it having the breast and the two arms stretching out from it of silver, instantly suggests the historical fact that Cyrus was the monarch, that Media was one arm, and Persia the other; these being two component parts of the kingdom of Cyrus, he being the tie that knit the two realms into one, inspired them with their vigor, wielded their energies with success, and established their empire.—**Inferior to thee:** Not in its extent of territory which was even larger, but in its political importance; and perhaps in the personal character and less absolute power of its kings who were many of them worthless and weak.

3. *The Kingdom of Brass: Ver. 39.*—The third kingdom, represented by the brazen waist and thighs, was the empire of Alexander the Great, whose power over all the nations flashed out like a meteor, and as suddenly passed away. He was the son of Philip, King of Macedonia, who conquered all Greece, and other adjacent lands. Alexander consolidated his father's conquests, and then crossed over to Asia for new fields of war. Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, and finally the whole Persian Empire fell into his hands by a brilliant succession of victories. He fixed his capital at Babylon, and in the midst of still vaster plans of conquest, died there, B.C., 323, at the age of only thirty-three years.

It is noteworthy how much use the Greeks made of brass in their works of art, in their coinage, and in their armour. One of their most common epithets, even in the time of Homer, was "brazen-coated."

4. *The Kingdom of Iron: Verses 40-43.*—There are two opinions concerning this portion of the image. Some of the more recent commentators, especially those of Germany, think that the reference is to the kingdoms established by Alexander's successors, especially to the Syrian or Selucian Empire, and the Egyptian line of the Ptolemies. But the weight of authority seems to favour the view that the great Roman Empire is here pointed out in the prophecy. It began as a humble village on the bank of the Tiber in Italy; by the force of its arms conquered all the ancient world, and embraced under one rule all the lands from the Atlantic to the Caspian, from Britain to Ethiopia.—**Strong as iron:** It was the greatest of the ancient kingdoms in every respect: in size, in completeness of mastery, in system of control, and in duration of empire, for its power over all the nations lasted five hundred years. But strong as it was, it contained within itself the elements of weakness. There is clay as well as iron; hard but brittle; such is the foundation of human power.—**They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men:** Those who hold to the theory that the fourth kingdom was the empire of the successors of Alexander explain this by the political matrimonial alliances made by those kings with a view to preserving and extending their power: those who hold that the fourth kingdom was the Roman Empire hold that this clause refers to the inroads of the barbarians, and the infusion of a foreign and base element into the empire.

Thus worldly power passes through its successive phases. But one hand controls all, one principle pervades all. "Through the ages one increasing purpose runs." That purpose we find in Christ. Each of these four empires had its work in connection with His kingdom and the preparation for it. Through the Babylonians, Israel underwent the discipline of captivity. Through Cyrus the Persian they were restored with a purer faith and the influences of the far East. The Greek language and culture, the Roman power and law,—both did a great work in the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom.

Whether they mean it or not, yet it is true that all kings and rulers are working out the will of God; though, such may be their spirit, they may, at the same time, be working out their own condemnation. Ps. xvii. 13, 14; Is. x. 5-15; liv. 16; Jer. li. 20; Ezek. xxix. 19, 20; Matt. xxvi. 24, 54; Acts ii. 23; iv. 27, 28.

## II. THE KINGDOM NOT OF THIS WORLD: Verses 44, 45.

—To reveal this kingdom is the purpose of the vision. By it all earthly kingdoms are to be superseded. It was to be insignificant and without beauty in its beginnings,—a mere stone: Isa. liii. 2. It was to be set up by God Himself. Cut out of the mountain without hands, it was itself to grow to be a mountain: Isa. ii. 3. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." It was to come in the days of these kings, when the power of Rome was at its height. It was not to be left to other people, that is, should have no succession; it is everlasting; and shall never be destroyed. Before it all other kingdoms are consumed, and it fills at length the whole earth, Ps. ii. 8; lxxii. 18, 19; Isa. xi. 9; Zech. ix. 10; xiv. 9. Before it all who are opposed to it, will be utterly destroyed. How can we get out of its way? Only by taking refuge in its cleft, coming to Him as unto a living stone. "He that believeth on Him shall not be confounded." Pet. ii. 4-7.

that he fell a victim to that terrible disease, diphtheria, which, after he had endured many weeks of intense agony, ended in his death. This is a great affliction to all who knew him well enough to understand his true, sterling worth. Although he had a manly, chivalrous nature that made him ever prompt to assist about him that made it difficult for mere casual acquaintance to know him. He inherited from his good mother the dignity and reserve of manner that are so natural to the Highland character, and which possessed by a noble man or woman prove an additional charm to those who are admitted into the circle of loved and trusted friends. In the choice of his friends and favorite authors, Mr. Durie showed fine powers of discrimination, selecting only the true and elevating. In his selections from the Scriptures, I often noticed that his choice was from the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, such passages as the twelfth of Romans, the thirteenth of first Corinthians, and the fifth of second Corinthians, showing that the clear and powerful arguments of the Apostle had a charm for the earnest young thinker and seeker after truth.

He bore his long painful illness with great Christian fortitude, but at last, his sufferings closed in the sleep of death, and his spirit passed away from earth, accompanied by angelic messengers to the home of the Saviour, the Rest that remaineth to the people of God.

Ottawa, April 15th, 1878.

PRESBYTERY OF BARRIE.—This Presbytery met at Barrie, on Tuesday, 30th ult. Present: Seventeen ministers and nine elders. A call from the congregations of Singhampton, Maple Valley, and Honeywood in favour of Rev. Edward N. B. Millard was sustained, and intimation having been given of Mr. Millard's acceptance of the call, it was arranged that the induction take place at Singhampton, on Tuesday, 21st inst., at 11 a.m. Mr. D. McDonald, M.A., was appointed to preside and address the minister when inducted, Mr. Henry Sinclair to preach, and Mr. R. Rodgers to address the people. The election of Commissioners to the General Assembly was made by voting, and resulted in the appointment of the following members: W. Fraser, D.D., Messrs. J. Gray, M.A., J. Leiper, J. A. McConnell, and R. Moodie, ministers; Messrs. Thos. Dallas, A. D. McNabb, Wm. McWhinney, F. Rogerson, and P. McHaffie, elders. Mr. David Ross who had completed the University and theological courses of study, was examined with a view to applying to the General Assembly for leave to take him on trials for license, and the examination having been sustained, it was agreed to make the application. Mr. Frederick W. Johnson was examined, and the Presbytery decided to recommend him to the Board of Examiners of Knox College for admission as a student. Leave was granted to Mr. A. Findlay to moderate in a call from Gravenhurst, Severn Bridge, and Washago, when desired. The Senate of Queen's College having recently conferred the degree of D.D. upon the Rev. W. Fraser, the Presbytery very cordially adopted the following motion prepared by Mr. D. McDonald: "That the Presbytery take this opportunity of tendering their congratulations to their esteemed father and co-presbyter the Rev. William Fraser of Bondhead, on his having the degree of Doctor of Divinity conferred upon him by the Queen's University on the 24th inst., and of, at the same time, expressing the fervent hope that he may be long spared to enjoy his well merited honours." The Presbytery agreed to meet for regular business on the last Tuesday of May.—ROBT. MOODIE, Pres. Clerk.

"THERE are times when God comes near to his people. There are occasions when efforts to advance his cause are specially blessed. There are harvest seasons for souls. This is proved by the whole history of the progress of the Church of Christ. At such times the hearts of men are ready to receive the seed of the Word. It falls as upon tilled ground, moistened by the rains of heaven. Where before all seemed hard and barren, we find mellowness and readiness to receive the seed, and to bring forth fruit. Such a season, we have good reason to believe, is now upon us. Pastors, and elders, and private Christians, will, therefore, suffer us to offer them a word of exhortation; and that exhortation is, that they be bold. The harvest is ripe, it is perishing. All around us are those who have heard the Gospel for years, but who have neglected its claims. It may be that even now the Spirit of God is striving with them—is convincing them of sin, of danger, of a judgment to come. Do not, then, delay. Do not wait for them to come to you. Go you to them. Speak to them. Pray for them. Remember that immortal souls are going down to death. Delay not, lest while you tarry they vanish from your sight."