

spirit; the image of what he had seen was distinct in his mind. Of course, we can easily understand, it was an utter impossibility for these men to interpret the dream; and if any one of them, perchance, had a glimpse of the meaning of the dream, no tongue was bold enough to utter what it might offend the King to hear; nor did any Chaldean dare to give a false interpretation. All drooping and abashed, they were forced to confess that the mystery could not be solved by them. Daniel was called into his presence, and when told the dream by the King, he seems at once to have understood its import; and he was much distressed, and his thoughts troubled him, and for a whole hour he remained in silence. There was an inward struggle in his breast. In that splendid tree he saw a picture of Nebuchadnezzar in all his pride of dominion; in the stump, left with its roots in the earth, bound with iron and brass, he saw an emblem of the same King, mad, miserable and degraded, driven to herd with the beasts. It was a dream of awful meaning, and we can therefore little marvel if Daniel shrank at first from revealing to the King the terrible calamity which was to befall him. Daniel had a plain though painful duty to perform. If self-denial, wisdom and faith dwell in the hearts and illumine the minds of the children of light, truth must breathe in their words. No fear of man must make the servant of God stoop even to an evasion; and so with Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar, having read perplexity and distress in his face, said to him, as if to encourage him, "Let not the dream nor the interpretation trouble thee." Daniel then spoke out boldly, and said: "My Lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation to thine enemies," and then with mingled courage and delicacy of feeling, the prophet delivered his terrible message. The heathen King had been Daniel's friend and patron: he had shown him great kindness; and it is not unnatural, therefore, to imagine what tenderness and pity, what painful emotions must have marked Daniel's countenance as he unfolded the dream to the King. It is important here to mark the pious faithfulness of Daniel: he acted the part of a true friend to the King of Babylon. Having given him the interpretation of the dream, he addressed him in words of earnest counsel and faithful warning: "O King, let my counsel be acceptable to thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor: if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquility." Only think of a Jewish exile speaking thus to the mightiest monarch of the world! but he did it for the good and safety of the King. We are not told whether the King believed the awful warning; whether pride, anger, wonder, alarm, wrestled in his