

this passage are not of the class to which we commonly resort for instruction in righteousness. In fact the vision here depicted of Isaiah seems to be that of some Gentile image worshippers and image makers, alarmed by the spread of true religion, and preparing to meet the danger by helping and encouraging each other in the ancient craft of god making. "So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith and he that smoothed with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, it is ready for the soldering, and he fastened it with nails that it should not be moved." The actors in this scene, then, are not at all the kind of people to whom we go, as a rule, for edification, and yet is there not something in their policy that as Christians we might profitably imitate. Observe, in the first place, how ready they are to help each other, not in a good but in an evil work. They might, when they found their craft in danger, have taken a somewhat different course. They might have met together and exhorted one another on the need of doing something, and then passed a strong resolution that something ought to be done, and that somebody would be blamable if something were not done to uphold the honour of their gods, and then adjourned to wait for action to be taken by some one in the premises. But what did they do? They saw, it seems, that waiting for one another and blaming one another would be folly. They saw that a house divided against itself could not stand, and unless their whole trade and occupation was not to go to destruction the indefinite *somebody* had to be dropped, and the definite *everybody* had to take hold and do something. And so, as we have seen, the carpenter, instead of throwing stones at the goldsmith, betakes himself to his carpentry, and the workman with the hammer to his hammering, and the blacksmith to his anvil. Nor was this all. Not only in the prophet's vision does every one help his neighbour by taking hold and hastening the work, but every one also assists his neighbour with cheering words, for we read that every one said to his brother, "Be of good courage." Had these idolaters been

very simple and short-sighted; had they been blind to their own worldly interests; had they desired to build up strong opposition to their work and to give their opponents the advantage, they would never have been so politic. They would have done as we Christians are too apt to do, and we should have read, so the carpenter discouraged the goldsmith and the goldsmith discouraged the man that smoothed with the hammer, and he that smoothed with the hammer discouraged him that smote the anvil. They would have said one to another, what is the use of working? What is the use of trying? And then, by and by, when inaction and discouragement had done their perfect work, they would have said to each other, I told you so. I told you that this work would end in failure. That is the way in which some people gain a place among the prophets, and not only prophesy, but live to see their predictions quite fulfilled. In fact it is a matter of sowing and reaping. Sow discouragement and you will reap discouragement. Sow encouragement and hope, and you will reap encouragement and hope. Which shall it be? Our business in this world is to help one another in the work of God. If in an evil work men can help and encourage each other, how much more should we, who profess to serve Christ, both stir up one another and strengthen one another in the best of all occupations, should we say with God's servant of old, "The God of heaven He will prosper us, therefore we, His servants, will arise and build."

E. D., Port Hope.

#### SECRETS.

I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. Matt. 13: 35.

How gradual the unfoldings of works and ways! What was obscure is now clear, what was dark is now day; we know in part, and thirst for more. He is infinite and we are finite, therefore we cannot know all. Our joy may be the joy of finding forever, and never finding to the full. Man is a searcher, his scrutiny takes a wide range, he looks—

I. At man. His methods, dis-

coveries, ingenuities, inventions and hidings. How many have searched in the Bay of Fundy in the caves for the gold hidden by Captain Kidd. Man searches into—

II. Matter. Mountain heights, ocean depths, the stars, the mines. How endless, exciting and profitable the secrets of nature. Man knocks at the rocky door, and strange to say gets an answer.

III. God, his nature, attributes, and government. "My soul searches for God." "Canst thou by searching find out God?" "Hast thou heard the secret of God?" Job 15: 8. "Who hath stood in the secret of the Lord?" Jer. 23: 18. To man's mute prayer He replies "I answered thee in the secret place of thunder." Psalm 81: 7. "He makes darkness his secret place." Psalm 18: 11. Secret things belong unto Him. It is His glory to conceal, and yet He says "I will give thee hidden riches and secret places." Jer. 23: 24. Oh, that I knew where I might find Him! Oh, the joy to hear these words: "I spake openly to the world, and in secret have I said nothing." John 18: 20. His secret is with the righteous. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. To counsel, encourage, enlarge, and in time of furious trouble He shall hide me in the secret of His tabernacle. Psalm 27: 5. He hides from the secret counsel of the wicked, defending with succour and salvation. The Father seeth in secret and rewards openly. Defends from outward attack and from inward foes. "Cleanse thou me from secret faults."

In the secret of His tabernacle what treasures He unfolds, how near we come in counsel! "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?" Are not His people His jewels, His treasures. His chosen ones, in whom is all His delight?"

Walk about Zion, tell the towers, mark the line of defence. On every hand we see the beauty of the Lord. For all our wants we discover a full supply.

"O city, where God's people dwell!  
O home, where no sweet bonds are  
riven!  
O country of Emmanuel!  
The only fatherland is heaven."

Beamsville.

H. T. MILLER.