

ends with the words: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Even if we were to think of the animals as figures for people, the fact would remain that the description is one of an external condition--a time when cruelty and hatred shall have been removed from the world, so that one can dwell in utter safety.

The eighth verse of Isaiah 11 makes this very clear: "The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrices' den." This is not a promise that the child shall not fear the asp but that the asp shall not harm the child. When I was in New Mexico a man told me of an incident that occurred in his little house in the wilderness. He heard a strange sound coming from the front room. Something seemed to hit something else, and then his little child laughed with glee. Again he heard the sound of hitting, and then the child laughing delightedly. After this had been repeated a few times, he glanced into the room to see what gave the child so much pleasure. He found that the child would hit his hand against the screen door. The door would fly partly open. A large rattlesnake outside the door would jump at the door. The door would shut with a bang. The child would again hit the screen with his hand and it would fly open a few inches, to the irritation of the snake. The child had no fear whatever of the beautiful snake which was leaping at it. Only the thin screen protected the child from the venom of the serpent. The father's blood nearly froze with fear that the screen might break and let the snake harm the child. There was no fear in the heart of the child, but there was tremendous danger in the external situation. It is not a situation like this that Isaiah describes. He predicts a time when a parent need not fear if his innocent child is playing with a serpent. There shall be nothing in this earth to hurt or destroy, "for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."