

no excuse for not accepting the teaching of passages that are perfectly clear. When Micah says that the nations will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks, we do not have to take the words absolutely literally. The prediction may be fulfilled when factories for making hydrogen bombs will be changed into plants for desalinization of sea water, or when nations will change their tanks and fighter planes into trucks and cargo planes. It is not necessary that swords and spears be in use at the time when this prophecy is fulfilled. To that extent the prophecy may be figurative. If, however, one says that it simply means that the Christian can have peace in his heart even in the midst of war and violence, he is taking a wonderful Scriptural truth clearly taught elsewhere, and inserting it in a passage that obviously teaches something quite different. We should interpret the Bible fairly and honestly, and not attempt to explain away any passage by simply saying that it is figurative of symbolical.

It is true that the Book of Revelation contains many symbols. While every reader may derive great spiritual benefit from the study of this book, it must be admitted that many parts of the section between chapter 7 and the middle of chapter 19 are difficult to interpret precisely, since this portion deals with events that will take place between the Rapture and the coming of Christ to earth with His saints. Conditions at this period may be different in many ways from anything that any of us have experienced; therefore it is necessary to use many symbols in presenting them. It is interesting to try to understand exactly what all of this material means, but part of its significance may well remain obscure until the time of its fulfillment is at hand. However, when we come to the middle of chapter 19 we reach material that is straightforward and clear. The connections with