

rather that he showed such courage as is typical of a lion. It would be entirely proper to suggest that the animals in this passage should be taken figuratively rather than literally, and one is required to consult parallel passages in Scripture to see which is the correct interpretation. It should be noted, however, that from either viewpoint the passage must be interpreted as indicating a time of external peace and safety on this earth, such as requires a "Millennium" for its fulfillment.

In mentioning the possibility of taking the passage figuratively, we must not be understood to suggest that the method known as "spiritualization" would be valid. This term is often used to indicate taking a passage so figuratively that every thing in it is a figure and there remains nothing solid on which to stand. A little salt on a fried egg increases its flavor, and a little use of figurative language in a generally literal passage increases its clarity and beauty, but if one pours a whole cupful of salt on a fried egg it ruins it, and if one attempts to interpret a passage as being entirely figurative it loses all significance. One must honestly and fairly examine each passage to see what it means in the light of the context. There is no room in sound Biblical interpretation for so-called "spiritualization."

Removal of the Curse

Considering, then, the question whether this passage is to be taken literally or figuratively, we note that if it is taken literally there is a thought introduced which we do not find presented in either Micah 4 or Isaiah 2. This is the thought that the animal creation is also to share in the blessings of the Millennium. This would indicate the removal of the curse which now rests upon the earth as a result of the sin of man. It is a remarkable thought and certainly not one to be accepted upon the basis of this passage alone, unless we find other passages in Scripture which fit with it and thus give us warrant for taking it as a glorious promise of the Lord.

We do indeed find such a passage in Romans 8:20-23, where the Apostle points out that the corruption of the creation is a result of the sin of man, and that it will be removed at the time when we ourselves receive the redemption