

spears into pruning hooks." That sounds like something that has never happened yet. It could hardly be a picture of heaven! They won't beat swords into plowshares in heaven. It's a picture of something that is going to happen on earth, where Zion and Jerusalem are. They are going to beat their swords into plowshares, and spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against, nation nor will they train for war any more."

Then v. 4 carries on that idea. "Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make him afraid. You certainly couldn't say that about the center of Philadelphia today! Some people are afraid to walk there in daytime. But this says they will be able to outside the walls of the city with the open field. They are going to sit under their vine and fig tree, and no one will make them afraid. Somebody said, The vine stands for the law; the fig tree for the gospel! And it means the preaching of the Gospel is going to have a tremendous effect in your heart!

It may be that no matter what happens around you, you won't be afraid. But this sounds as though external conditions are going to be such you won't have any need to be afraid. Such a time is going to come. Verse 5 is an excellent verse. I used to be puzzled by v. 5. I used to think it said, the nations are going to keep on following their gods, but I think what it should be is that the nations do walk in the ways of their gods. You see the tremendous loyalty the Mohammedans have, and the Buddhists, and the Confusists, etc. Yet ~~we~~ you find Christians who are ashamed to let people know they are Christians!

The God who could give a promise like this-- we are going to walk in His ways. You see it's not really part of a vision, but the first four are part of the vision. That would seem to be almost identical with Isaiah except the last verse is where that says "many nations", this says "all nations." They both say they will not prepare for war any more. Nation will not take up sword against nation.

To say nation will not take up sword against nation in heaven doesn't mean anything. To say that in eternity there won't be any war doesn't mean anything. He is quite clearly promising a time of freedom from external danger. In the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. after Constantine became a Christian, there were apologists who said, This describes the victories of the gospel so that there is peace when formerly all the nations were fighting. Now we have peace and harmony; there's no longer any war. The only wars were just on the outskirts of the Roman empire.

Yes, but somebody said the peace came because Augustus established peace. That happened about 20 years before Christ was born. Yes, they said the influence of the kingdom of Christ extends backwards as well as forwards! The coming of Christ has given us peace throughout. But then in the next century the barbarians broke into the empire and in every part of it there was war and strife and it has been that way ever since up to the present century. So what was a wonderful apology for Christianity