

Before leaving this subject we must look at another important feature of the prediction in Isaiah 11:1-9. We noticed that the description of the animals in verses 6-8 very clearly indicates a time when external danger is to be removed. Yet one cannot help wondering whether the picture goes beyond merely presenting this idea. Would it be possible that the animals here are not merely figures for the establishment of universal peace among human beings, but that, in addition, God is promising that the essential character of the world of nature is itself to be changed.

Such an interpretation cannot be simply ruled out. The first chapter of Genesis tells about God's original creation of the world. After the account of the creation of fish and sea monsters, we read in verse 21 that "God saw that it was good." Is it really good that sharks and other predatory monsters of the deep should prey upon weaker ones? After the account of the creation of land animals, including "everything that creepeth upon the earth," verse 25 ends with the words, "and God saw that it was good." The last verse of the chapter begins with the words: "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."

Naturalists tell us that great sections of the animal creation cannot exist in their present constitution except by preying upon other creatures. The poet speaks of "nature red in tooth and claw." People who have been mauled by lions or bitten by rattlesnakes are not apt to think of all nature as good; yet when God created the world, it is explicitly stated these three times that what He saw was good.

The explanation is to be found in the teaching of Genesis 3 that a great change in nature occurred later on. When man deliberately turned his back on God and sinned, God introduced a change into the whole creation. Man's body, which had previously not had in it the seeds of decay,