

Even though the preaching of the Gospel has always produced both spiritual and material blessing wherever it has gone in the world, it has never yet produced a Utopia even in the countries where there are the largest numbers of professed followers of Christ, to say nothing of the world as a whole, nor does Scripture anywhere hold out such a hope. The Gospel has never anywhere converted all, but everywhere has called out some. Verse 3 describes One who "shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off." This language hardly seems appropriate to the going forth of the Gospel of God's grace, but it is in keeping with an authoritative rule over all the earth centering in Jerusalem. There can be no doubt that Micah and Isaiah clearly predict, on the authority of the Lord of Hosts, that a great Golden Age of righteousness and peace is ahead for the world.

The same is true in Isaiah 11. It would be absurd to say that the picture of the animals living together without injuring one another was intended as a picture of heaven. The language introducing it relates very definitely to earth. "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea." Only a very superficial interpretation could consider these statements to be a description of heaven.

Even more false is the idea of considering that these are simply in some sense spiritual pictures and not to be taken literally. It is true that the Bible has many figurative expressions in it. Every great piece of literature contains many figurative expressions. Figures of speech are natural, but figures of speech must be used sparingly. If everything in a