



## THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN THE WORLD.

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AND the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together ; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed : their young ones shall lie down together ; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the basilisk's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain ; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.—*Isaiah xi.*, 6-9.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. . . . For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit the redemption of our body. For by hope were we saved : but hope that is seen is not hope : for who hopeth for that which he seeth ? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.—*Romans viii.*, 18-25.

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THE most important thing in the world—the divine event to which the whole creation moves—is the ordering of the lives of all kindly creatures on lines that make for benignity, friendliness, and mutual service and interdependence. By this I do not mean the forming once for all of a social system regulated upon a hard-and-fast social code covering all the details of life like the Institutes of Lycurgus or the Book of Leviticus ; not an attempt to *make* a perfect social system, but the establishing of society on principles from which it might have a chance of *growing* into increasing perfection, without periods of deadlock, of misdirected progress, or of retrogression such as civilised communities have always hitherto displayed. In short, a society, not perfect in details, but, on the other hand, not fundamentally wrong, as a system based on rank, privilege, and monopoly, instead of on industry and ability, must always be.

I claim these humane conditions, as I say, for all “ kindly ” creatures. I confess I have no hope for the lion, the asp, the bear, and the basilisk, which the eloquent and sonorous Isaiah represents as living in millennial