

# **“Beasts and Creeping Things”**

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“A little child shall lead them; . . . they shall not hurt nor destroy.” Isa. 11:6, 9.

On the plains, in the desert, among the cliffs of the mountains, along winding rivers and silvery lakes, swinging from lofty tree-tops, burrowing in the ground, creeping through the grass, and hiding 'neath the leaves, we find creatures, living creatures, so many and so wonderful that we are led to exclaim, “O Lord, how manifold (many) are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all!” Ps. 104:24.

Each animal is fitted by the all-wise Creator to do just those things that it needs to do. Esquimaux [Eskimo] dogs, foxes, bears, and many other animals have a warm coat for winter and a cooler coat for summer; the Arctic fox has even fur slippers for the bottom of its feet. Some of the animals in hot countries do not have any hair or fur, but have skins so thick that a common bullet cannot go through them. The silken fur of the Water Shrew is better than a rubber coat to keep out the water when the animal is swimming, and although the mole is a great digger, none of the earth can stick to its glossy coat. As the Honey Weasel lives mostly on honey and the young of the honey bee, it has a thick, loose skin through which the bees cannot sting. The Hedgehog has a coat of sharp springy spines to protect it when it throws itself down from high walls or meets an enemy.

Dogs and cats and tigers cannot use knives and forks, as we do, in eating their food, but their sharp teeth and claws do as well. The teeth of the rat, mouse, and rabbit, are repaired or mended, as fast as they wear out. And the teeth of the Asiatic Elephant grow up as fast as they are worn away. When the whole tooth is worn out, it falls from the jaw and a new one comes in its place. The Elephant's long trunk serves for hands, a pump, and many other things. The Mole has shovels, the Oared Shrew oars, the Hedgehog and Porcupine an armour, and the Kangaroo a cradle in which to carry its babies. The Spider Monkey uses its tail to hook food out of places too small for its hand. The Ant-eater has an insect catcher, the Musk Rat a perfume sac, the cow four food pouches, the camel a water bottle, and cushions for its breast and knees and feet, and even pussy has cushions on her feet. Find out, if you can, how they use all of these strange things.

Some animals have very odd habits. The bear, squirrel, wood-chuck, field mouse, and other animals sleep nearly all the winter with little or nothing to eat! But in this wintry sleep breathing is almost entirely stopped, and the blood circulates very slowly. This is why we see so few animals in the winter. Frogs, toads, spiders, bees, and many of the birds do this. The Mole has a very curious habit of working three hours and then resting three. The Brush-tailed Betty fastens its tail around a bundle of grass and hops away with it to its nest. The opossum, when attacked falls down and pretends to be dead till its enemy leaves. The hippopotamus carries its young on its back. The monkeys take hold of one another's tails and make living bridges across streams. The beaver cuts down trees, builds houses and dams, and plasters them with mud.

As you put on your warm clothes, do you ever stop to think where they come from? Some of them are made from the woolly coat of the sheep, the hair of the camel or Cashmere Goat, or the fur of the beaver or brown rat! Even the skins of young goats are made into gloves called kid gloves. The buffalo robe is the skin of a bison, and carriage robes and rugs are sometimes made of the shaggy coats of bears and wolves. We get ivory from the elephant. Polecats' hairs are used for artists' brushes. Hogs' bristles are also used for brushes, and their hide is made into leather for saddles. The otter can be taught to catch fish for its master, the Shepherd Dog to tend sheep, the St. Bernard Dog to find lost and freezing travellers, the Reindeer and Esquimaux Dog to take the place of horses in cold countries, the ox to plough, and the noble horse to be the companion and servant of man. The cow gives us milk, butter, glue, leather for our shoes and carriage and harness, and hair for plastering. Even the despised rat saves the lives of thousands of people in our large cities by eating the decaying things in the sewers.

The more you study and think about the animals the more you will see to admire, and to thank God for. For it was God, who, on the sixth day, made "the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth after their kind; and God saw that it was good." Gen. 1:25. Oh, to have seen them then! Not a poor, sickly, or cross animal among them all! Not one that would hurt or kill, for then none lived on flesh, but upon the green herb which God gave them for their meat. Gen. 1:30. They all were more tame and friendly than your dog or kitten.

Now, many animals are wild and so fierce that we would be afraid to meet them outside of a cage. But God has made a wonderful promise. He says that by-and-by the beasts will all be as good and friendly as they were at first,—so friendly that a little child can lead them. Listen, here is His promise:—

"The wolf also 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; the lion shall eat straw like the ox. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy." Isa. 11:6, 7, 9.

In other parts of the Bible we learn that this will be after He has made the earth all new again and destroyed every evil thing. Where will you be? Will you be among the evil things that will be destroyed, or among the happy children who will live on the beautiful new earth with Jesus, and who will lead the friendly lion and the bear? If you would be with Jesus then, you must live to please Him now. If you are cross and rude to your parents, and cruel to God's birds and animals now, He could not trust you to live with them in the perfect new earth. Jesus invites you to be there, but He cannot take you unless you here learn to be kind and gentle and good.

1. What animals do you have at your home?
2. Name some other places in which we find animals.
3. Which is the strongest beast? Prov. 30:30.

4. Which is the tallest?—The Giraffe is the tallest of all earthly dwellers; it is from 18-20 feet high. As it feeds upon the leaves of trees it has long legs and a very long neck, and a tongue so formed that it can be lengthened or shortened or wrapped round one leaf. It can make this tongue so small at the tip that it can pass into the pipe of a common pocket key.
5. Name some creeping things. Lev. 11:20, 30.
6. What kind of clothing do part of the animals have in cold weather? In warm?
7. What kind do some have that live in hot countries.
8. Name a few of the wonderful tools that beasts have.
9. Why do we not see so many animals in winter as in summer?
10. What strange thing does the Opossum do? The Monkeys? The Beaver?
11. Would we be so comfortable and happy if there were no animals? Why not?
12. Who made all of these wonderful creatures, and fitted them with just the right kind of clothing and tools?
13. Then which is greater, the creatures or the Creator?
14. Suppose we should think more of them than of Him, or should worship them, as some do, how would He feel?
15. Or suppose we should treat them cruelly, would He be pleased?
16. To whom do they all belong? Ps. 50:10.
17. Then have we any right to be cruel to them?
18. When we enjoy their companionship, and see how wonderfully they are made, what should it lead us to do? To thank and praise the wise, good Father who made them.
19. When did He make them?
20. Were they then just as they are now?
21. Which do you enjoy most, wild animals or tame animals?
22. What precious promise has God made about them? Isa. 11:6, 7, 9.
23. When will that be?
24. Only what kind of children will He permit to lead the animals on the new earth?