

"The Blessed Hope"

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"Where is the promise of His coming?" for "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." This, dear children, is what will be said in the last days, the Apostle Peter tells us, by "scoffers" who do not believe the Word of the Lord that tells them of His coming, of which we talked a little last week.

From "the beginning of the creation," from the days of Adam and Eve, God's people have looked forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This has been their one great hope and comfort through all the ages.

Enoch, "the seventh from Adam," prophesied of this time, saying "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His holy ones." Job who lived very early in this world's history, spoke also of the same "blessed hope," in these beautiful words:—

"I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

He knew that although his body should go into the grave and crumble into dust, yet at the coming of Jesus, "the Resurrection and the Life," he should awake from his long sleep to "see God."

In another beautiful passage he tells us what was to waken him in that glorious day for which he longed: "Thou shalt call, and I will answer Thee." Yes; at the voice of Jesus, even the dead awake, and answer to His call. He "calleth the things that be not as though they were," and immediately they are. He calls the dead, and they live.

Perhaps you are thinking of how He showed His power to do this when He was on the earth,—how he stood at the grave of Lazarus, and cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" "And he that was dead came forth," even though he was "bound hand and foot with grave clothes."

Oh, there is power in His Word of life, dear children, power that can overcome death and every obstacle, and cause all things to be just what He says.

Before this Jesus had told His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep;" and they answered, "Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well." They did not understand that his was the sleep of death,—a sleep from which Jesus alone could wake him.

Jesus said to Martha, the sister of Lazarus, "Thy brother shall rise again," and she answered, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said: "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

It was just as easy for Jesus to call Lazarus forth then as it will be at "the last day," in "the hour that is coming when all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth."

The Apostle Paul tells us not to sorrow as those that are without hope, over "them that are asleep." For "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise." And again he tells us that at the coming of the Lord, "the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible."

Think how much, then, dear children, depends upon the coming of the Lord Jesus. Think of the thousands of His children still sleeping in the dust, waiting for His mighty voice to shake the earth, and rend the tombs, and form them again from "the dust of the ground," out of what He made man in the beginning by the power of His Word.

As you, little ones, fall peacefully asleep at night, knowing that in the morning you will hear the voice of your mother calling you from your slumbers to the light and joy of a new day,—just so peacefully, and in the sure hope of a joyful awakening, did those holy men of old, of whom you love to read in your Bibles,—Abraham, Jacob, Samuel, David, Daniel,—lie down to rest when their appointed time came to "sleep with their fathers."

And of the "early Christians," those who lived in the centuries just after the time when Jesus was on earth, we are told that "they were accustomed to bid their dying friends 'Good night,' so sure were they of their awakening in the Resurrection morning."

But what a long, long night, you will think; thousands of years for some of God's children, and, still "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation," and "Where is the promise of His coming?"

Read the third chapter of the second Epistle of Peter, where you will find his answer to the "scoffers" who say these things, and we will perhaps talk it over together next week.