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The Doctrine of Resurrection unto Life Eternal as Presented by St. Paul in His First Epistle to the Corinthians

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Bentley -- Notes on First Epistle to the Corinthians
Grewey -- Woerterbuch der Theologie und Kirche
p. 127-128
Hedding -- Der Neutestamentliche Paulus
Ridwards -- Useful quotations

The Doctrine of the Resurrection unto Life Eternal

In International Conference
As Presented by St. Paul in
His First Epistle to the Corinthians,

Kretschmann -- Popular Form of the New Testament
A Thesis

Luther -- Von der Freiheit eines Christen
Submitted to the Faculty of

Medicine
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As Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

B. D. Degree

Bentle -- Greek New Testament
by

Thayer -- Greek-English Lexicon
Walter A. Enge

Winer -- Grammatik des Neuen Testaments

Zorn -- Die Korintherrede, p. 107

Concordia Cyclopaedia

Robert Commentary, I. Corinthian

p. 432-433

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p. 127-128

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Engelder, Notes On ChiliasmTheological Quarterly, 1897, p. 68ffSynodal-BerichteDes Mittleren Distrikts, 1886, C. M. ZornIch glaube eine Auferstehung des Fleisches

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Nebraska, 1918, Geo. Metzger, Unserelebendige Christenhoffnung, p. 18-81Lehre und WehreVol. 30, December, 1884, H. WeselohFirst Corinthians 15, p. 404-415Vol. 40, May, 1894, Der Moderne Subordinationismus im Licht der Schrift, p. 129-140Vol. 73, June, 1927, Adam Fehling,Neutestamentliche Zeugnisse fuer die Auferstehung des Fleisches, p. 163-175Concordia Theological Monthly, An Exegetical Curiosity
Th. Engelder (From the files of Prof. Laetsch)

Horsch -- Modern Religious Liberalism, -- Immortality --

Introduction p. 212-215

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QUESTION

Only the resurrection unto life eternal must be treated.

I. Who will be raised unto life eternal?

- A. Only Christians -- I. Cor. 15.18,24 (p. 605)
- B. All Christians except such as perish at least 15.1,5,10,12 (p. 605)

II. What is the proof for our resurrection?

A. Proof from Christ's resurrection

- B. Scriptural evidence of the Old Testament
13.1-3 -- (p. 7-8)

C. Proof from eyewitnesses (p. 9-17)

- A. Cephas, Peter -- 15.5 John 21.15
- B. Twelve disciples -- 15.8 Matthew 28.18
- C. Five hundred at one time -- 15.5,6,10,12
- D. James -- 15.7
- E. All Appear for the last time mentioned
15.7
- F. Paul himself -- 15.8-11

OUTLINE

Introduction: Quotations of outstanding men who had philosophical reasons for believing in a resurrection from the dead. But we need something more.

Only the resurrection unto life eternal shall be treated.

I. Who will be raised unto life eternal?

- A. Only Christians --- I. Cor. 15,18,22 (p. 3-5)
- B. All Christians except such as survive at last
15,22,51,52 (p. 5-7)

II. What is the proof for our resurrection?

A. Proof from Christ's resurrection

- 1. Scriptural evidence of the Old Testament
15,1-4 -- (p. 7-9)
- 2. Proof from eyewitnesses (p. 9-17)
 - a. Cephas, Peter -- 15,5 Luke 24,34
 - b. Twelve disciples -- 15,5; Lk.24,36; Jn.20,19
 - c. Five hundred at one time -- 15,6 Mt.26,32
 - d. James -- 15,7
 - e. All Apostles for the last time at ascension
15,7
 - f. Paul himself -- 15,8-11

B. Proof from the dangerous implications which would follow from the supposition that there is no resurrection from the dead

1. Christ is not risen -- "This ye believe!"
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2. Our preaching is then vain -- 15,12-14 (p.19)
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(p. 20)
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6. Those who fell asleep in Jesus died in a vain hope -- 15,18 (p. 22-23)
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15,29 -- Polemics -- (p. 25-31)
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- A. With the very same bodies -- 15,49,53 (p. 41-42)
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 - a. Analogy in the plant world -- 15,37,38
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 - b. Analogy in the animal world -- 15,39 (p. 46)
 - c. Analogy among the heavenly bodies --
15,40,41 (p. 47-48)
 - d. Conclusion Paul draws from these analogies:
These bodies are perfectly suited to this
new life. 15, 42-44 (p. 48-50)

NOTE: Those who are still living will be changed —

15,50-53 (p. 50-51)

POLEMICS: Germ of the resurrection body -- (p. 51-52)

Resurrection is unreasonable -- (p. 52-54)

IV. When will they be raised? -- At Christ's second coming --

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- A. When Christ will deliver the members of the Kingdom
of Grace to His heavenly Father -- 15,24 (p. 55-56)
- B. At the sound of the last trumpet, in a moment
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V. For what purpose will they be raised? -- To live with God and to sing His praises forever in heaven --15, 54-57 (p. 64-65)VI. What practical applications may we draw from these truths?15, 58A. The joy of our resurrection -- (p. 66-67)B. The perfection of our justification thru Christ's death and resurrection -- (p. 67-68)C. Strength to lead a sanctified life -- 15, 30, 32
6, 14, 15 (p. 68-69)D. Increased zeal for the work of the Kingdom, if we are fully conscious of this doctrine -- 15, 58b
(p. 70-72)

Conclusion: This, the hardest doctrine of all doctrines to believe is at the same time practical and is definitely established in Scripture (p. 72-73)

1.

"We do not believe in immortality because we have proved it, but we forever try to prove it because we believe it." In the opinion of James Martineau, therefore, the author of these words, there is no proof for the existence of a life after death. In fact he thinks his faith in immortality is grounded on a very weak foundation. There are many philosophers also in our day who share this opinion with him. They believe in immortality, altho they do not know why they do so. Others again are more daring and boldly advance certain reasons for their faith in a second and better life after this one. But even among the latter there are few who place their belief in a deathless, never-ending life on the same basis. Witness the reasons advanced for a belief in immortality in the following quotations:

Aristotle: "Whatsoever that be within us that feels, thinks, desires, and animates, is something celestial, divine, and consequently imperishable." Dryden: "The thought of being nothing after death is a burden insupportable to a virtuous man." Emerson: "We are much better believers in immortality than we can give grounds for. -- The real evidence is too subtle, or is higher than we can write down in proportions." Theodore Parker: "I ask no miracle, no proof, no reasoning, for me.-- I ask no risen dust to teach me immortality.-- I am conscious of eternal life!"

Bulwer: "Man only of all earthly creatures asks: 'Can the dead die forever?' -- And the instinct that urges the question is God's answer to man, for no instinct is given in vain." These statements may to a certain extent have satisfied their authors, but they do not give any positive assurance of the resurrection of his body unto eternal life to a person, conscious of his sins and shortcomings, to a person who knows there is a just God in heaven, to whom he must some day give an account of his life in this world.

No, our faith in the immortality of our body must rest on something more than some vague imaginations and conjectures of a human brain. As Christians we turn to the Bible for an answer to the question: Is there a life after death for the believers in Christ? A clear-cut, affirmative answer is given us in the only true and reliable source of all spiritual knowledge. Let us then look at the Biblical doctrine of the resurrection unto life eternal as it is presented by St. Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians.

First a brief word in regard to the word resurrection. Whenever we shall speak of the resurrection, we shall always mean the resurrection of the body. Moreover we shall limit ourselves in this discussion to the resurrection unto life eternal, because this is the resurrection that is of such vital concern to us and to all

Christians. This resurrection, not that of the wicked, was the one concerning which Paul desired to instruct the Corinthians. Therefore he speaks of the resurrection unto life eternal almost exclusively when treating the doctrine of the resurrection in his First Epistle to the Corinthians. -- All Biblical references in the following paragraphs are to the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, unless the contrary is clearly indicated.

I. Who will be raised unto life eternal?

A. Only Christians

The first question that merits our attention is: Who are those who will be translated from death unto life? In verse 18 we read: Ἐάντοις οἱ Κοινωνεῖς ἐν Χριστῷ πνεύματος, namely, if Christ did not rise from the dead (v.17), then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ are perished. This statement has several implications. First, all those who have not fallen asleep in Christ, the unbelievers, are perished, even if Christ did rise. Christ's resurrection does not influence their fate. Secondly, if Christ did rise from the dead, then all those who died, trusting in His all-sufficient work of redemption are not perished; they will not suffer the fate of the damned. But there is even a clearer passage, which tells us exactly what

their lot will be. Verse 22 reads: "Ἐγέρησίς εἰς τῷ
 Ἀδάμ πάντες ἀπονεύγκουνται, οἵτις καὶ εἰς τῷ Χριστῷ
 πάντες συνεπολεύγονται. Τίτλος in the first half
 of the sentence is not used in an absolute sense; it
 is restricted by the context (verses 12-23), in which
 Paul speaks exclusively of the Christians and of their
 resurrection as a result of their Savior's triumphant
 return to life. The sense of the passage is this:
 Even as the Christians die as a result of Adam's sin,
 so they will also be made alive as a result of Christ's
 resurrection. Τίτλος in the latter half of the sen-
 tence is not to be interpreted absolutely either, as
 some exegetes insist, for it is definitely restricted
 by the phrase εἰς Χριστόν. Unbelievers certainly
 will not be made alive εἰς Χριστόν. Christ's life, death,
 and resurrection are not the nor even a cause of their
 resurrection.

This is also evident from verse 20, where Christ
 is called Ἄπαξ γά τῷ κεκομητούσι, "the first-
 fruits of them that slept." Surely Christ cannot be
 called the Firstfruits of them those who are perished.
 The first sheaves of grain gathered in the harvest
 season were a guarantee that the rest of the harvest
 was soon to follow. Now Christ is the Firstfruits of
 those who slept. His resurrection assures their resur-
 rection. But as the firstfruits would also indicate

of what quality the entire harvest would be, so Christ's resurrection also indicates the nature of the resurrection of those who are to follow Him. For in verse 49 we read: "And as we(Christians) have borne the image of the earthly (Adam), we shall also bear the image of the heavenly (Christ)." But Christ's resurrection has nothing in common with that of the unbelievers.¹⁾ If Paul had wished to include ^{unbeliever} in his statement in verse 20, he could not have used the picture of the firstfruits, for there would then be no tertium comparationis. Hence only those who have fallen asleep in Christ (v.18) will be made alive in Christ. Only these, only the Christians will experience the resurrection unto life.

Tho this applies only to Christians, it is said with just as much certainty of all Christians.

B. All Christians

$\Pi\alpha\rho\tau\zeta\varsigma$ in verse 22, as we have seen, is restricted by $\Sigma\rho\chi\rho\zeta\varsigma$. With this restriction added, however, it must be understood in an absolute sense. $\Pi\alpha\rho\tau\zeta\varsigma$ can only mean all, everyone, unless it is more definitely restricted. We have seen that this verse speaks only of Christians, but from $\Pi\alpha\rho\tau\zeta\varsigma$ we see that it includes all Christians without a single exception.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall

1) Cf. Luther -- Vol. VIII, 1155 (St. L. Ed.)

all be made alive," (v.22). Because of Adam's sin all men are subject to death. More than this, in Adam all men have already died. Adam's death was a vicarious death. As in Adam all men died, so in Christ will all be made alive. Christ's death and resurrection also were vicarious. He died and rose for us. His resurrection assures us of our resurrection. Our resurrection is as certain as if it had already taken place.

Now, we may ask, but what becomes of those Christians who will not die, those who will be living at the Lord's final advent? -- They need not experience temporal death, because they too have already died in Adam. They will nevertheless be made alive on that Last Day, i.e., they will be changed so that they can enter that new, heavenly, eternal life. St. Paul tells us this in verses 52 and 53: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." Thus all Christians, those who have died and shall die, and those who are still living on Judgement Day will be made alive, glorified. Their bodies will be prepared to enjoy the bliss of heaven. (For a full treatment of this passage, see III, **NOTE**)

The quickening, the vivifying unto life eternal then applies only to Christians, but to all Christians, even to that generation which is living when Christ returns to judge the quick and the dead. But what proof have we for

the Christians resurrection unto life eternal? What is the basis for this resurrection?

II. What is the proof for our resurrection?

Our resurrection is dependent upon the question: Did Christ rise from the dead? If Christ did not rise, then resurrection unto life for any other person is an impossibility. The purpose of Christ's life was to atone for the sins of mankind. Now if the punishment for only one sin had not been suffered by Christ, if only a single transgression had remained unexpiated, this would have been enough to prevent the resurrection of Christ. "The righteousness of God would not have permitted the return to life of Him who had failed in redeeming the world."¹⁾ By raising Christ, God would show that His wrath was appeased, that the sacrifice of His Son had fully atoned for the world's sins. Now if we can prove Christ's resurrection, then we can be certain that atonement has been made for all of our sins, and that therefore we will rise from the dead unto eternal life. If we can prove Christ's resurrection, then our resurrection is just as certain as His. If not, then all falls to the ground. Because Christ's resurrection is the foundation for our resurrection, Paul enters into the certainty of Christ's

1) Kretzmann - Popular Com. N. T., Vol.II, p. 160-161

resurrection in great detail. He advances four separate arguments as proof for Christ's resurrection.

A. Proof from the resurrection of Christ

1. Scriptural evidence

The Apostle first asks the Corinthians to recall what he had preached to them, that message of the Word of God, which the Corinthians had accepted, and on which their faith and Christian life was based. But just what had Paul preached to them? In verse 3 he testifies that the first thing he had done was to call their attention to the Old Testament prophecies and show them how these prophecies were fulfilled in the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament Scriptures are Paul's first proof for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He cited such passages as Isa. 53, 4,5,8-10 "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows:....He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.", or Ps. 16,10: "For Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell: neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." No doubt Paul pointed out to them that all the prophecies of the Old Testament, with the exception of those that pertain to eschatological matters, were literally fulfilled, and that therefore also these prophecies concerning the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ must have been consummated. *Kαὶ τὸς ἡσάρχοντας* says Paul. He begins with the very foundation. If we had no other proof besides the testimony of the Hebrew Scriptures, we would be forced to believe in Christ's resurrection, because these Scriptures clearly foretell the resurrection of the Son of God. And "the Scripture cannot be broken" (Jn. 10, 35). Thus the first proof Paul cites for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the Gospel of the world's Redeemer, which was based on Old Testament prophecy.

2. Proof from eyewitnesses

a. Cephas

Paul now proceeds to the fulfillment of these prophecies by introducing a large number of eyewitnesses of the Lord's resurrection. The first person he mentions is

Cephas, also called Simon Peter. The risen Savior had appeared to Peter on Easter Sunday, sometime before the disciples of Emmaus returned to Jerusalem in the evening to tell the apostles and other disciples of the Savior's appearance to them. It is impossible to fix the exact time of the appearance to Simon more definitely than this. This is after all only a minor matter. The important fact is that thru this appearance of Christ to him, Peter became an eyewitness of the Lord's resurrection.

b. Twelve Disciples

The next witnesses mentioned by Paul are "The Twelve." He is referring to the appearance of Christ to the apostles on Easter evening and evidently also to the appearance on the following Sunday. He uses the term "The Twelve" more or less as a proper name, by which he designates "the college of Apostles, without exact regard to number."¹⁾ Actually there were only ten apostles present the first time. No one had as yet been elected to take the place of Judas Iscariot; and Thomas was absent from this gathering on Easter evening. In narrating this appearance St. Luke speaks of "the eleven and those with them." (Lk. 24,33) So evidently a number of other believers had come together here with the ten apostles. It was on

1) Expositor's Greek N. T. Vol. II. p. 920

this occasion that Christ proved to the disciples one time after another, that he was the very same person who had lived among them before His crucifixion which had occurred only two days ago. He appeared in their midst thru locked doors, He spoke with them in the same familiar voice and said: "Peace be unto you!" He showed them the scars in his hands, feet, and side, He asked them to touch His body, in order to prove to themselves, that He was not a spirit. He ate ^a broiled fish and some honey before them, and finally, He explained the Scriptures to them, and showed them how all the events of the past few days had to occur in order "that the Scripture might be fulfilled." (Lk. 24, 36-48; Jn. 20, 19-23) On that memorable evening these ten apostles received indisputable proof of the resurrection of their Savior. All of them later on boldly testified to this fact. They indeed were eyewitnesses of Christ's resurrection, second to none. Surely it would be contrary to the reason of every thinking human being, and especially obnoxious to the learned Greek thinkers to discount the testimony of such reliable witnesses! No, the witness of these men was positive proof of the Lord's resurrection.

c. Five Hundred at one time

Paul now comes to that appearance of the risen Christ, made before an assembly of over 500 disciples. At no other

time of which we know did Christ appear to so many people at one time. The Savior's resurrection was not "a thing done in a corner," Acts 26,26. It was not an event witnessed by only a few individuals, whose senses of perception may have deceived them. On the contrary, hundreds of persons who had known Him personally before His death now saw the very same Man after He had passed thru "the valley of the shadow of death" and had broken the fetters of the tomb. Christ wanted the fact of his resurrection firmly established, and to achieve this end He exhibited Himself to this large gathering. Most likely this is the manifestation on a mount in Galilee, the appearance which the angels had promised the disciples on Easter Sunday (Mt. 28,7,10, Mk. 16,7, Lk. 24,6) and which Christ Himself had foretold on the night of His betrayal (Matt. 26,32). True, Matthew, in describing this scene, mentions only "the eleven." But the presence of a larger assembly is implied in the words: "But some doubted." It is hardly plausible that any of the eleven would still have doubted at this time for they had seen the Lord at least twice already after his resurrection, six of them had seen Him not less than three times, and for Peter this was at least the fifth appearance (Jn. 20, 24,26; 21,2,14; Lk. 24,34). The Expositor's Greek N. T. states: This was the culminating manifestation of the risen Jesus, made at the general gathering to which His

brethren were invited in a body." 1)

The overwhelming testimony which these people bring to the resurrection of Christ is emphasized by Paul when he says of them: "The greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep", (v.6). Most of these people were still living and gladly testified to and praised God for all the things that they had heard and seen." (Lk. 2,20) A man would have to be insane to insist that these more than 500 men were deceivers or that they themselves had been deceived and deluded. The eye-witnesses to the Savior's resurrection are gradually forming an unbroken line of irrefutable testimony.

d. James

The next witness brought to the attention of the Corinthians by Paul was James, who was evidently honored by a special appearance of the Lord Jesus (v.7). This may either have been James, "the elder" or "the younger", also called "the brother of the Lord." It is hard to decide because this is the only passage which mentions the revelation to James. It possibly is James "the brother of the Lord," since James "the elder" had been executed already before Paul wrote this letter. One might expect a reference to his death if the latter was meant. Which-

1) p. 920

ever of the two it was, this James had special corroborative evidence of Christ's resurrection since he had evidently seen Him alone, even as Peter had.

e. All Apostles for the last time at Ascension

Now in verse 7 Paul again mentions the apostles as eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Christ. This time he especially says all apostles, for "Paul was presumably, aware of the absence of Thomas on the occasion of verse 5,"¹⁾ the first appearance to the apostles on Easter evening. This was not the manifestation on the Sunday after Easter, (Jn. 20,26) but rather the last meeting of Jesus with the apostles just before He ascended to heaven (Acts 1, 6-12). Evidently Paul has listed the appearances of Christ in chronological order, for he constantly uses $\tau\pi\epsilon\tau\alpha$ and $\epsilon\tau\epsilon\tau\alpha$. Since this appearance to the apostles is the last one mentioned, besides the one to Paul himself, it must have been an appearance to all of them after the other appearance mentioned here, after Christ's meeting with James and with the 500. The only one of this kind known to us is the appearance just before the Savior's ascension into heaven. On that Thursday he once more was visibly present among the men who were to spread the Gospel of His vicarious suffering and death and of His triumphant resurrection, into all the world. One final opportunity

1) Expositor's Greek N. T. Vol. II. p.921

was given them to behold their Savior, to converse with Him, and to walk together with Him. Thus they corroborated their former experiences. They made sure that their senses had not deceived them, but that the man with whom they were speaking was the Christ with whom they had lived for three years, and whom they had laid in a grave only six weeks before. There was no longer the faintest shadow of a doubt in their minds as far as the fact of Christ's resurrection was concerned. They knew He was alive, and no one would ever be able to convince them of the contrary.

f. Paul himself

Paul closes this list of eyewitnesses with the words:

*'Εγώ απόλωλε' πάντων ὁ Γέρεσπει τῷ ἐκτρωματι
ὑφενή καθηού. Altho Paul was not one of the Twelve Apostles, altho he had not even seen the risen Savior during those forty days after His resurrection in which He appeared to His friends, yet he counts himself among the eyewitnesses of Christ's resurrection. And rightly so, for the glorified and risen Redeemer appeared to him in a special revelation, at the time when He called him to be His apostle. Christ was seen of him ὁ Γέρεσπει τῷ
ἐκτρωματι. *Ἐκτρωματι* is an abortion, an untimely birth, "an unfit and repulsive creature brought into the world before the proper time." 1) Paul calls himself an*

1) Kretzmann - Popular Commentary, N. T. Vol. II. p. 161

abortion "in contrast with those who, when Jesus appeared to them, were already brothers or apostles, already born as God's children into the life of faith in Christ." 1) Thus Paul also qualifies as a reliable eyewitness of Christ's resurrection. In verses 9 and 10 he now makes a brief digression and speaks of his unworthiness, his inadequacy, his incompetence for the office or work of an apostle. But by the grace of God, he says, he has been able to accomplish more than all the other apostles. Now in verse 11 he draws a conclusion from the foregoing statements.

*Eἴτε οὖν εἰώ εἰτε ἐκεῖνοι, οὐτως καρύογομεν
καὶ οὐτως επειγόμενοι.* Paul means to say:

Now it does not make a particle of difference, whether I have preached the fact of Christ's resurrection to you or whether this was done by one of the other apostles.

We all preach the very same thing. We all have seen the risen Savior with our own eyes and this fact we have preached to you as the truth. And what is more, you yourselves have believed it, *οὐτως επειγόμενοι!* You have accepted our testimony because you found it unsailable.--The Corinthians did not doubt the fact of Christ's resurrection in the least. It would have been folly for them to deny it, because it was too definitely established.

Too many eyewitnesses of Christ's resurrection were still living! For Paul wrote not more than 25 years after the

1) Kretzmann - Popular Commentary, N. T. Vol. II. p. 161

event itself. The fact of Christ's resurrection must stand, because the testimony of these eyewitnesses is unimpeachable!

In spite of the fact that the Corinthian Christians firmly believed that Christ rose from the dead, there were some who persistently denied a general resurrection of the dead. They discredited this doctrine altho they did not dispute the fact of Christ's resurrection. Such a position conflicts with Scripture as well as with the fundamental laws of logic. It was a contradiction, Paul goes on to show but one of which they evidently were not aware. Paul therefore says to them: "Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead?" Your attitude surely is not only unscriptural, it is not even consistent with clear thinking!--Paul now proceeds to show them their error, pointing out to them in the following verses what precarious implications their position involved.

B. Proof from the dangerous implications which would follow from the supposition that there is no resurrection from the dead

1. Christ is not risen

The apostle would say to the Corinthians: Now let us suppose that you are right when you say, there is no resu-

rection from the dead. What must logically follow from this supposition? First of all that the doctrine concerning Christ's resurrection is false, that Jesus did not rise from the dead.--If, as they insist, no one will be able to rise from the dead on the Last Day, then they must of necessity also reject Christ's resurrection. They dare not make an exception in His case. If resurrection is impossible for all it is impossible for Christ, since He died as a true human being. Surely the Corinthians were not ready to admit this, as we have seen. If on the other hand they accept Christ's resurrection, they cannot, if they remain consistent, deny the final resurrection of the body unto life. His resurrection proves not only the possibility, but, as we have already noted and shall see still more clearly later on, also the certainty of the resurrection of the body unto life eternal. Or as the Expositor's Greek N. T. Vol. II. states this fact:

"If He is risen, the axiom *Ἄνταξις ὡ̄κ ἐγένετο* is disproved, the spell of death is broken, and Christ's rising carries with it that of those who are in Christ." 1) --

This first conclusion which Paul draws from the supposition of the erring Corinthians is the basis for the remaining six deductions which he now makes. He repeats his statement in verse 16 in order to "emphasize the argument that the

1) p. 923

Christian faith in the resurrection rests not on philosophical theory, but on historic fact." 1)

2. Our preaching is vain

If Christ did not rise from the dead, $\kappa\epsilon\nu\circ\tau\alpha\tau\delta$
 $\kappa\gamma\pi\alpha\gamma\mu\alpha\;\eta\mu\bar{\omega}\nu$, "then is our preaching vain."

The Corinthians should realize what this means for Paul.

If Christ were not risen, then Paul had worked under a false hope the entire latter part of his life! His powerful sermons, his arguments, his encounters with his enemies would have been in vain! $\kappa\epsilon\nu\circ\varsigma$ signifies empty, void, unsubstantial. $\mathcal{M}\alpha\tau\alpha\lambda\circ\varsigma$ used in verse 17 means ineffectual, frustrate. In his preaching Paul would then have "become as sounding brass, or a tinkling (clanging) cymbal," (I Cor. 13, 1). There would have been no substance to his sermons. They would have had no effect on the people. But the Corinthians themselves knew what great things Paul's preaching had done and was still doing for them. Of all men, they would be the last ones to admit that it had had no effect on them, that it had been in vain. Yet, Paul's argument is, if they deny the resurrection of Christ, they must accept this statement, they must believe that Paul's preaching, and that of all the other apostles as well, is vain.

1) Pulpit Commentary, I. Corinthians, Robertson-Plummer,
 p. 484

20.

3. We are found false witnesses of God.

For years Paul and the other apostles had openly testified to Christ's resurrection. Now if the Corinthian critics are right, their attitude would be an attack on the character and truthfulness of the apostles. The latter would not only be "deluded fools, but tricksters and imposters" 1) as well. *Ἐνσηκόνειτο* "we would be found," i.e. discovered, proved to be, set forth in shame as *ψευδομάρτυρες* "false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not," v.15. Paul could use this argument with the Corinthians because they knew that he was sincere and a man of his word. They would not think of calling him a liar! Yet that is exactly what they would have to do, if they denied the resurrection unto life.

4. Your faith is also vain

From the non-existence of the fact Paul now deduces the unreality of the effects derived from it. The Corinthians accepted Paul, they rejoiced in the message he preached, they comforted themselves with the forgiveness of sin and the hope of eternal life. If Christ, however, did not rise from the dead, then their faith is based on a falsehood, a lie, a delusion of man and hence it is worse than useless.

1) Kretzmann - Popular Commentary, N. T. Vol. II. p. 161

"Your faith is vain," v. 14, 17. Such a vain faith will not accomplish anything for the Corinthians, no matter how sincere they are, nor how firmly they believe the promises of the Scriptures. Not only the article of the resurrection from the dead, but the entire fabric of Christian doctrine collapses if Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead as was prophesied. If Christ was not raised, the Carinthians' whole faith, their entire hope of future glory falls to the ground.

5. Therefore ye are yet in your sins

The natural result of a faith based on a delusion would be: Ἐτι εἰστε ἐν ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις νῦν,
 "ye are yet in your sins," v.17, for faith is essentially trust in the forgiveness of sins. The Scriptures indicate no other way by which we may obtain forgiveness of our sins, except thru the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. By promising to raise Christ from the dead, God had given us a sign by which we could determine whether Christ's suffering was sufficient to save us, whether His sacrifice was a acceptable to His Heavenly Father or not. If God therefore did not raise Christ from the dead, He must not have been satisfied with Christ's work of redemption. Then Christ did not atone for all sins, and hence for none! "Can you not grasp this, my dear Corinthians?" Paul would say, "Then you are yet in your sins. You can

no longer be Christians and trust in a risen Savior for forgiveness. The full burden of your sin is resting upon you, crushing you. And there is not the slightest possibility that you can even lighten this load of lead, with no thought of removing it altogether." What misery! They are to draw their own conclusion: Paul and the apostles are true witnesses; we are redeemed believers; "on both accounts it is certain that Christ has risen, and therefore that there is a resurrection of the dead." 1)

6. Those who fell asleep in Jesus died in a vain hope

Not only the living, however, but also the dead, who died in Christ, are in their sins if the story of Christ's resurrection is a fable. "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished," v.18. Paul refers to their relatives who had calmly fallen asleep in Jesus, but who died in a vain hope, if the contention of some of the Corinthians was right. Their sins are then unforgiven. They are perished. But this the Corinthians did not believe. On the contrary, they were persuaded that their loved ones who had preceded them in death were saved. They could not imagine that those who had firmly trusted in their Lord Jesus for eternal life, and had passed over

1) Expositor's Greek N. T. Vol. II. p. 924

into eternity probably with a smile on their lips and joyful expectation written on their faces, that they should have been disappointed in their hope. To be lulled to sleep in this way when falling into ruin would indeed have been vanity, as much as Paul's preaching and the Corinthians faith, if Christ were still in His grave. *Mατάνιτης*, vanity, means that which is devoid of truth and appropriateness. No, this could not be! Their fate was not that of perdition. The Corinthians were certain their loved ones had fallen asleep in Jesus and that their sleep was that blessed sleep

"From which none ever wakes to weep;

A calm and undisturbed repose,

Unbroken by the last of foes." (Luth. Hymnal No. 540, v.1)

7. We are then the most miserable of men

Paul states the last disastrous result of the supposition advanced by some Christians of Corinth in these words: *Ei ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡ τοπεία ἐν Χριστῷ γίγνεται εἰς μόνον, ελεύθερός πολὺ δέντων ἀνθρώπων σέμερ,* v.19. A twofold interpretation is here possible, depending on the translation. The authorized Version translates these words: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." Luther also seems to connect the *μόνον* with *ἐν τῷ σώματι τοπείᾳ*, altho one can give the second interpretation to his trans-

lation by emphasizing: "Hoffen wir allein in diesem Leben auf Christum, so sind wir die elendesten unter allen Menschen." If we accept the King James' translation, we must place the emphasis on the thought, that Christianity would be a "Diesseitigkeitsreligion" if Christ had not risen. If in spite of the assumption that Christ had not risen, people would believe in Him and His resurrection, they would thus comfort themselves in this life only. For they would be brought to ruin as soon as they die. 1) Such deluded souls would indeed be "the most miserable of men."

The Greek word order, however, favors the second interpretation: "If we only hope in Christ in this world, we are of all men most miserable." 2) Paul wishes to establish the fact that we must be absolutely certain of Christ's resurrection and of our hope of eternal life thru His resurrection. Merely to hope for heaven after death, gives us no certainty upon which we can rely. We will then have no definite assurance of our present deliverance from sin nor of our future inheritance in heaven. In matters of this kind we must know! Even the slightest doubt is enough to make us miserable. Therefore we must not only hope in Christ in this life, but we must know definitely whether He rose or not. This interpreta-

1) This view taken by P. H. Weseloh in Lehre und Wehre Vol. 30 p. 406

2) Pulpit Commentary, I. Corinthians, Robertson-Plummer, p.386
Expositor's Greek N. T. Vol. II. about p. 924

tion fits into the context very well also, for in the very next verse Paul gives us the assurance we need by saying: Νῦν δὲ Χριστὸς ἐγεγενήκεν ^{γέγονός} "But now IS Christ risen from the dead!" v. 20 (Cf. conclusion to part II)

D. Proof from the life of Paul and other Christians

Surely after all these arguments, our resurrection must be definitely established in the mind of everyone who reads the fifteenth chapter of I Cor. But Paul wishes to make this "assurance doubly sure" and therefore introduces more proofs for this doctrine. The testimony he now offers is taken from the life of Paul and other Christians.

1. Custom of being "baptized for the dead"

The first proof presented in this group is the much discussed custom of "being baptized for the dead." The passage itself reads: Επεὶ τι πολὺ γονού σι βαπτίζομενος ὑπέρ τῶν νεκρῶν; εἰ δὲ λόγος γέγονός ἐστιν, τι καὶ βαπτίζονται ὑπέρ ^{γέγονός} More than 30 interpretations have already been given to this much disputed phrase Οἱ βαπτίζομενος ὑπέρ τῶν νεκρῶν Before discussing the correct interpretation we must look at the preposition ὑπέρ around which most of the discussion centers.

Yπερ may, according to Thayer, mean:

1. Over, above, beyond, across. This is the original, the basic meaning. But the word never occurs in this sense in the New Testament, unless it has that meaning in this passage.
2. For, for another's safety, for another's benefit,
3. In the place of, instead of
4. On account of, for the sake of
5. Concerning, of, as respects, with regard to

Each one of these possible definitions has been accepted by some commentator. The third one of these "in place of, instead of" is probably the most commonly accepted definition for this passage.¹⁾ Paul would then be referring to a custom of vicarious Baptism, living Christians being baptized for those who had died without Baptism. This explanation, however is untenable for Paul would be drawing a correct conclusion from a false premise,²⁾ the false premise being that one Christian may be baptized for a friend of his who has died without this Sacrament. Scripture nowhere allows this. On the contrary it insists that everyone must be baptized and must believe for himself: Acts 2,38 "Repent and be baptized everyone of you."³⁾ Had Paul actually referred to a custom of vicarious Baptism, it would have been imperative for him to state clearly that neither He

1) Thayer -- Greek-English Lexicon of the N. T. (Given under $\beta\epsilon\nu\tau\eta\mu$ fin.) and many others.

2) Fehling Lehre und Wehre Vol. 73 p. 169

3) Luther -- (St. Louis Edition) Vol. VIII. p. 1196

nor God approved of this custom. Otherwise he could have been accused of having a mental reservation, a principle adopted by the Jesuits at the end of the Middle Ages.¹⁾ But if he had explained that this was an erroneous custom, he would have weakened his argument considerably.

An interpretation similar to this one is the second, "for another's benefit."²⁾ This explanation is open to the same objections as the first.

Others accept *ὑπὲρ* in the sense "on account of, for the sake of, on behalf of."³⁾ Many permitted themselves to be baptized because they saw how cheerfully the Christians bore suffering and how calmly they faced death in times of persecution. They could see that in the hour of death these Christians were confidently expecting eternal life and trusting in a resurrection from the dead on the Last Day. The Christians' assurance rested to a great extent on their Baptism. "The death of Christians leads to the conversion of survivors, who in the first instance

1) Fehling - Lehre und Wehre Vol. 73 p. 170

2) Meyer - Commentary on the N. T. - I. and II. Corinthians p. 364

3) Weseloh - Lehre und Wehre Vol. 30 p. 408 -- p. 414

Expositor's Greek N. T. Vol. II. p. 831

for the sake of the dead (their beloved dead) and in the hope of reunion turn to Christ." ¹⁾

One of the editors of Lehre und Wehre, Vol. 30, states that this interpretation presents an insurmountable difficulty. "Die Toten, die Gestorbenen, waere doch ein zu brachylogischer Ausdruck fuer im Zustande des Sterbens getroste Christen." ²⁾ But this argument can hardly stand, because the common use of language does not substantiate it. Just to cite a present-day analogy: A mother is on her death-bed. Before she dies she obtains the promise from her son, that he will study to be a Lutheran pastor. In later years this son may say: "I promised my sainted mother that I would become a Lutheran pastor." -- We surely do not consider the expression "My sainted mother" too brachylogical, because it stands for the mother while she was still living. Could not Paul in a similar manner have described these people according to their present condition ($\tau\hat{\alpha}\nu\ \nu\varepsilon\kappa\beta\hat{\alpha}\nu$), but have referred to an act of theirs which occurred just before they died?

Still others maintain that Paul is here referring to the "Baptism of trial and suffering thru which the disciples had to go, which often involved even death." ³⁾

1) Expositor's Greek N. T. p. 931

2) Lehre und Wehre, Vol. 30, p. 414, NOTE

3) Pulpit Commentary, I Corinthians, p. 547

Also held by Barnes Notes on First Corinthians, p. 322

But "οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι unless otherwise defined, can only mean the recipients of Christian Baptism, in its well understood sense as the rite of initiation into the Christian state administered upon confession of faith." 1)

Some of the less common interpretations are:

1. "The dead" refers to the Messiah, the plural being used for the singular, meaning "the dead one." 2)

2. οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι ἐν τῷ νεκρῷ means "Being baptized as dead" i.e. being "Baptized with Christ by Baptism into death." 2)

3. "Being baptized with the hope and expectation of a resurrection of the dead." 2)

4. βαπτίζω is sometimes taken in the sense of "Washing, cleansing, purifying" as in Heb. 9,10 Μόνον ἐπὶ βρύμασιν καὶ πλύνασιν καὶ σπερμάσιοις βαπτίζονται, "Only in meats and drinks and divers washings," where the writer of this Epistle speaks of Old Testament ordinances. 3)

None of these nor any of the host of other explanations can be accepted for the reason stated in the previous paragraph.

The most plausible interpretation is given by Luther, who takes ἐντόπῳ in its original sense of "above, over." He maintains that the Christians were baptized over or

1) Expositor's Greek N.T. p. 930

2) Listed in Barnes, Notes on Corinthians , p. 322-323

3) Barnes, Notes on Corinthians, p. 322

Dr. A. T. Robertson quoted in Con. Theol. Monthly

at the graves of their loved ones, thus showing their faith in the resurrection of those who had already died.

"Um den Glauben dieses Artikels von der Auferstehung bei den Leuten zu staerken, Liessen (sie) sich taufen bei der Toten Graebern, zu einem Wahrzeichen, dass sie gewisslich glaubten, dass die Toten, so da begraben lagen, und ueber welchen sie sich taufen liessen, wuerden wieder auferstehen, und dasselbe fuer so gewiss hielten, dass sie gleich als mit Fingern darauf zeigten." 1) Meyer objects to this interpretation, because $\nu\pi\sigma$ is not used in its original local sense anywhere else in Scripture. Winer, however refutes this objection by saying: "Koennte denn diese einfachste lokale Bedeutung nicht blos an einer Stelle vorkommen?" 2) It is readily understandable that this primitive meaning of $\nu\pi\sigma$ should not occur frequently in later Greek. But it is by no means impossible that it should occur at all. Ewald also takes this attitude.

While the explanation accepted by the Greek Expositor's Greek New Testament, namely, that many were baptized on account of the fortitude and confidence of the dying Christians, is possible and does not conflict with the Greek grammar nor with the analogia fidei, yet it does not quite measure up to the simplicity and natural-

1) Luther, Vol VIII., 1196-1197

2) Winer, Grammatik des N. T.lichen Sprachdioms, p. 342

ness of Luther's interpretation. Whichever the original meaning of Paul may have been, it is obvious that the Corinthians knew exactly to which Paul was referring at the time, and that they would have to concede that this was additional proof for the resurrection of those who had died in faith. This confidence in a resurrection unto life after temporal death, which some of the Corinthians had expressed by being baptized $\nu\pi\zeta\rho\ \nu\kappa\rho\omega\rho$, was useless if there was no resurrection from the dead. For if this latter contention were true, then they would not rise from the dead, no matter how firmly they believed this doctrine, nor how boldly they confessed their faith in a resurrection by being baptized $\nu\pi\zeta\rho\ \nu\kappa\rho\omega\rho$.

2. Paul stands in jeopardy every hour

Not only, however, would the Corinthians and other Christians be poor deluded fools if there was no resurrection from the dead, but also the Apostles themselves. Paul continues: "And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I die daily." (v.30). The last sentence is found at the end of verse 31 in the Authorized Version, but the great majority of manuscripts place it at the end of verse 30. The sense is the same in either case. With the word $\dot{\gamma}\mu\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ Paul designates himself in particular and presumably includes also the other $\dot{\alpha}\mu\acute{a}t\acute{e}s$ and all who suffer for the Gospel's sake. Why do we knowingly

place ourselves into constant danger? Why do we continually, every hour, put ourselves in peril, if there is no resurrection from the dead? Surely it would be useless, yes foolish for us to submit to persecutions if the Savior is not risen and has not promised to raise us! We could escape all dangers, perils, and punishments by ceasing to preach the resurrected Christ. But we positively refuse to do so, because we know there is a resurrection from the dead. If you are tempted to believe this fable that the dead in Christ do not rise unto life eternal, then think of me and of the fact that "I die daily." Every day of my life I am in danger of death, not that I may gain some personal advantages or glory, but solely for this one purpose, that I may preach the fact of Christ's resurrection and of your own resurrection thru Christ to you and to all men. Now if there were no resurrection from the dead I certainly would not go to all this trouble and run all these risks. My whole life simply cannot be explained unless there is a resurrection from the dead.

In order to assure the Corinthians of this beyond a shadow of a doubt, Paul uses the asseverative particle *νη̄*. This is the only place it is used in the New Testament, but it is common in the classical writers. 1) *Nη̄ τη̄ρ οὐετέρα καύγον, δοξαλοί, η̄ρ ιχνεύειν Χρυστω̄ Ιησοῦν τῷ κυριώ̄ γιμνώ̄.*

1) Meyer, Commentary on the N.T. -I & II Cor.- p.369

The translation of the A. V., "By your rejoicing which I have, etc." is not exact. The pronoun $\sigma\mu\epsilon\tau\sigma\delta\alpha\gamma$ is used in a peculiar sense, so that the translation should read: "By the glorying over you, brothers, which I have in Christ Jesus, my Lord." ¹⁾ This objective use of the pronoun is not very frequent, but there is another instance of it in this same epistle, chapter 11, verse 4: *Tοντο πολειτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀράγεσσαν* "This do in remembrance of Me." -- The Corinthians were the glory, the boast of Paul, because they had been personally instructed by him. He swears by his glory over the Corinthians, that which was dearest to him. As certainly as Paul boasted of the Corinthians, so certainly he endured all these dangers. With this solemn oath he assures them that he is suffering daily, yea hourly, for the sake of the Gospel of the resurrection from the dead. -- Lest, however, the Corinthians think Paul is boasting of his own accomplishments he immediately adds: "Which I have in Christ Jesus, our Lord." (v.31). Christ had done the work in Corinth thru him. So when Paul was glorying he was really glorifying Christ. -- Thus Paul's suffering was another proof for the doctrine of the resurrection of the body of the believers to everlasting life.

3. Paul's suffering at Ephesus

In order that this proof offered by St. Paul would

1) Expositor's Greek N. T., p. 932

stand out in bold relief in the minds of the Corinthians, in order that they would have a vivid picture of his sufferings, Paul refers to a specific case. "For if after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die." Paul is here speaking from the human point of view. If he had only in the interest of temporal reward, gain, glory, and the like, fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage would he have reaped from such action? He is evidently not referring to an encounter with wild beasts in the arena at Ephesus, for nowhere else, not even in the long categories of his sufferings, is there a reference to such an encounter. Hence he must be recalling an occasion on which "He was near being torn to pieces by infuriated men."¹⁾ Surely he would not steadfastly have opposed these men, if after a few years, after death, he would be doomed to the same fate as they, if there were no resurrection from the dead. If the latter were the case he would follow the perverted slogan of the Epicureans: "Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die!" What good would a lifetime of suffering do him, *cui bono?* if there were nothing better to be expected after this life? Then he would much rather enjoy this life as long as it lasted. Paul's entire Christian life, his strenuous work and his intense suffering would have no meaning if there were no resurrection from the dead.²⁾

I) Int. Cr. Com. p. 362 2) Cf. L.&W., Vol. 73, p.170

E. Proof from God's divine will and plan

1. The first Adam and the second Adam

The final proof for our resurrection is the divine will and plan. When God created the first man, Adam, He gave him a natural body, a body fitted for life on this earth. "The first man Adam became a living soul," (v. 45a). Adam was not intended to be subject to death, for God had planned after a certain time to change this "Natural body" into a "Spiritual body," one that would be fit for life in heaven.[#]) Here we must distinguish between *σωμα φυσικόν* (natural body) and *σωμα πνευματικόν* (spiritual body). The former does not refer only to the soul of man, but to his entire being, his whole person as he lives in this world with his senses, and is sustained by food, drink, and all the necessities of life. 1) *Σωμα πνευματικόν* is then also his entire self as it is in every detail perfectly suited to the resurrection life in heaven. "The spiritual body is the body fitted for the spirit life in eternity, where the believers in Christ commune with God, who is a Spirit, in a body adapted to such spiritual communion." 2)

The possibility that Adam's natural body could die was of course there. But before the time for the trans-

1) Pieper, Christliche Dogmatik, Vol. III. p. 605, Footnote

2) J. T. Mueller - C.T.M. Vol. I. p. 272

#) Syn. Ber.- Des Mittleren Dist.- 1886, C.M.Zorn, p. 44

formation of this natural body into a spiritual body came, man fell into sin. With the fall into sin man lost everything spiritual, especially also that quality of his natural body by which it could be changed into a spiritual body. In order to restore to man what he had lost thru sin, God sent a second Adam, a second Man , into the world. This Man was Jesus Christ. "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit;"(v.45). "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven," (v.47). "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead,"(v.21). As by a man death came into the world as a punishment for sin, so by another Man the resurrection from this death was pro- cured. As death came upon us thru a guilt not our own, so the resurrection from the dead comes to us thru a grace not our own. Thru His death and resurrection, Christ gained for us that spiritual body, which we for- feited by sin. Now as we have born the image of the first Adam, i.e. as we have a natural body, a body like that of Adam adapted to life in this world, one that eats, sleeps, walks, etc., just so we will also receive a spiritual body like that of Christ, one that is free from all these restrictions of our earthly existence, provided of course that we believe in the resurrection of Christ.

"If there is a natural body, there is a spiritual body," (v. 44b). "As is the earthy (Adam), such are they also that are earthly; and as is the heavenly (Christ), such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly," (v. 48, 49). This is God's divine plan and immutable law and order. "As we in this life have lived after the image of Adam, so in heaven we shall be after the image of the Lord of heaven, our adorable Savior Jesus Christ." ¹⁾ As from Adam we have bodies suited to life on this earth, so from Christ we will receive bodies suited for the life in heaven. We can be certain that if we have a natural body, and if we are faithful subjects of the Lord of heaven, we will, we must receive a spiritual body after death. Naturally this is only possible if there is a resurrection from the dead. Hence the will of God to give all believers a spiritual body proves that there must be a resurrection from the dead.

2. First the natural body, then the spiritual

To this argument the Apostle possibly expected some objections from the Corinthians. They might say: If God really has determined in His infinite love to give

1) J. T. Mueller - Con. Theol. Monthly, Vol. I. p. 274

us a spiritual resurrection body, why does He not do so at once instead of insisting that we live in our natural body for such a long time? Hence Paul inserts the words: "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual (v. 46)." "According to God's inscrutable, but good will, the lower is to precede the higher; the earthly, the heavenly. First God willed the seed time, after that the harvest."¹⁾ God has seen fit to let man live in this natural state first and then in the spiritual. To this divine will we must be subject.

3. Christ as the Firstfruits

The climax of Paul's proof for the certainty of the resurrection of the believers unto life is contained in verse 20: "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." Paul compares the risen Christ to the firstfruits of a harvest. The first sheaves of grain gathered toward the end of summer are a guarantee of the entire harvest which is to follow shortly. Thus Christ, the first human being to rise gloriously to immortality (The widow's son, raised by Elijah, the Young man of Nain, etc. were not raised to immortal life, ^{2) γενέσις} Elijah and Enoch were not raised.) is a positive pledge,

1) J. T. Mueller - Con. Theol. Monthly, Vol. I. p. 274

a guarantee, that all believers will follow him in the resurrection from the dead. As certain as we are of the entire harvest when the firstfruits are brought in, so certain we can and must be of our resurrection, because Christ, the Firstfruits has already risen from the dead. God willed that He should be the first to rise and thus prove to us that we will be raised. The certainty lies in the word ἀπομόνωμα, firstfruits. For if no one else would rise, Christ could not be the Firstfruits. "As Christ did not die for Himself, but for us, so He did not rise for Himself, but for us!"¹⁾ O that we would more often think of this glorious promise Paul gives us in Christ! If we would occasionally stop to ponder what the fact that "Christ is the Firstfruits of them that slept," means to us as followers of this Christ, we would rejoice and thank God for having given us this pledge of our own resurrection from the dead. Surely no promise could be more clear and more certain than this one, which seals to us everlasting bliss and glory in the presence of our risen Redeemer!

Thus Paul has established the doctrine of our own resurrection, by showing that it is based on Christ's resurrection which in turn he proved from the Old Testament, from eyewitnesses of the Savior's resurrection, by pointing

1) Ebeling - Der Menschheit Zukunft, p. 69

out the dangerous implications that would follow from the supposition that there is no resurrection from the dead, by referring to the influence of the doctrine in his own life and that of other Christians, by calling attention to God's divine will and plan. After hearing Paul's arguments no sober-minded Corinthian Christian would dare to contradict them. They granted a resurrection of the body unto life, but there was another question which puzzled them now. Paul anticipates this and therefore tells them the question they will no doubt ask of him, namely: "With what body do they come?" They believed the soul would continue to live and also that it would dwell in a body of some kind. But just exactly what kind of a body this would be they could not imagine. For surely that body which they laid in the grave, which in a few years decayed and turned to dust, surely it was out of the question that this body would again be inhabited by a soul. The existence of this body was at an end soon after death. In a few years there was no longer any trace of it. So it is only natural that the Corinthians wanted to know where God would find bodies for the souls of the Christians and what kind of bodies these would be. Paul answers the question at length.

III. How will they be raised?

A. with the very same bodies

In verse 49: "As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly," Paul uses the pronoun "we" (contained in the verb) in its commonly accepted sense, designating the entire person of everyone of whom he is speaking. He does not refer only to the soul, for he says "As we have borne the image of the earthly." This we did especially in our body, which is like the body of Adam, fitted for life on this earth. Thus "we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." We, our body, the very one we have at the present time, together with our soul will be suited to live in that heavenly realm. No indication ^{is given} that the resurrection body will be an altogether different body, a body separate and distinct from our present body; the very body we now have shall be glorified in this manner. What may be gathered by deduction from verse 49 is stated directly, in clear unmistakable words in verse 53.

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." *Ἄει γένεται οὐρανοὶ τοῦτο ἐνθύματα ἀγαπάσια καὶ τὸ θρύλον τοῦτο ἐνθύματα ἀναραγίαν.* To *γαρ* *τοῦτο* "this corruptible," signifies anything that is liable to corruption or perishability. The context shows clearly to.

what Paul refers. It cannot possibly mean anything else than the body of the believers. This perishable body, which will disappear a few years after our death, shall put on imperishability, incorruption, namely in the resurrection. So it is the very body which we now possess that shall rise on the Last Day. And to emphasize the sweet truth of these words Paul makes another very similar statement and says: *Kai τὸν ὄντα τοῦτο* "And this mortal, this body subject to death, *ἐργάσθειται ἀναγένεσιν*" shall put on immortality." This very body--in order to make sure Paul describes it again: it is mortal--this body shall receive the gift of immortality, it shall live forever after it is once raised from the dead. As incredible as this may seem to our finite minds, and as it no doubt also appeared to the Corinthians, it is nevertheless true. Every Christian will receive that body which he had in this life, even if he was burned at the stake, eaten by wild beasts or devoured by the monsters of the sea. The omnipotent God will gather every minute fragment and particle of these individual bodies and unite them in a complete whole, so that they will be exactly the same bodies which they were during their earthly existence.

B. In the image of Christ (with glorified bodies)

From the fact that our resurrection bodies will be the very bodies we now possess, we may not deduce that

therefore the life after death must be at least similar to if not identical with the life we now live. For the Apostle tells us that certain changes will take place in our bodies, some of their present characteristics will be removed and other attributes will be bestowed upon them. The foremost of these attributes, ^{is} the state of incorruption in which these bodies will be raised.

1. They are raised in incorruption

Verse 53 is again the basic passage: "For this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." Verse 42 states the same truth: "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption." We heard before that we will "bear the image of the heavenly," namely, of the heavenly Man, the second Adam, Christ. Christ's body was immortal after He rose from the dead. St. Paul writes: "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." (Rom. 6,9,10) Even so we will rise never again to sink into the grave. Our entire body will be so constituted as to be able to live into all eternity. It will be perfectly adapted to an everlasting existence. The fear, the mysteriousness of death will no longer fill our hearts. Instead God's everlasting peace will fill our

being and this perfect contentment and celestial joy is never going to be cut short by death or any minor affliction which may have troubled us during our earthly existence. For mortality and all its causes are forever removed. The blessed shall live forever in immortality and incorruption!

2. They are raised in a state of perfection

Immortality is not the only new feature of life eternal. The bodies of the believers will be raised also in a state of perfection, fit for the new life of perfection. In the 13th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians Paul already states: "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child; I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." (v.10-12) As a child acts and thinks in a childish manner and later "puts off childish things," when it becomes a man, so our present body now regulated by conditions here on earth shall put off all restrictions placed upon it here by these conditions and shall live under the new dispensation, under new conditions and laws.

Paul also assures the Corinthians that this is indeed

possible with God, for does not God perform similar acts before the eyes of all men every day? Three analogies are cited by the apostle.

a. Analogy in the plant world

"And that which thou sowest, thou savest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body (v. 37,38)."

When kernels of grain are sown on a field, they will not produce stalks of wheat or oats unless the seed which was sown decays and dies. As soon as this happens green sprouts begin to appear above the soil. They continue to grow until the harvest.

For every kernel of grain placed in the ground we now have a complete plant, much more glorious and different from the kernel which was sown, but nevertheless a plant which is essentially the same as the seed which was sown. God has merely given the seed a much more glorious body. Since God does this every day, year after year, will He not be able to give our body, which is sown in the ground when it is buried, a more glorious body, perfected, suited to the life which it shall then begin to live? God has not given this kernel of grain a new, i.e. a different body for "God giveth it a body as it has pleased Him, and to every seed his own body." A stalk of wheat will never

spring from a kernel of corn. Even if ten different varieties of seeds are sown on the same field, each tiny seed will reproduce a plant of its own type. Thus Paul reestablishes the fact that our resurrection body will be the same body we now have. The only difference will be that it will be more glorious, it will have those heavenly characteristics which it needs for a heavenly life. A grown person is the same being he was when he was a child, and yet how different the two are. Thus also in the resurrection our body may be the same body we now have and still have many new characteristics and features.¹⁾

b. Analogy in the animal world

The second analogy Paul cites is taken from the animal world. "All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds." The diversity in the organization of animal life is practically endless. God has created an infinite variety of bodies, which are all made up of flesh, blood, and bones. Now if God is able to do this, can He not also adapt our present body to the needs of the life after death?

1) Synodal-Berichte, Des Mittleren Distrikts, 1886,

c. Analogy among the heavenly bodies

The heavenly bodies are cited as the final analogy. "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another(v.40)." Meyer insists that the "heavenly bodies" are the angels.¹⁾This interpretation is open to the criticism that angels are not bodies, but spirits! No, we must take the interpretation Paul himself gives us. In the very next verse he mentions the heavenly bodies of which he is speaking, namely, the sun, moon, and stars. "Celestial bodies are those we see in the heavens, terrestrial those we see on earth, e.g. mountains, stone, etc. Paul calls these objects bodies probably because the Greek philosophers called all material things "bodies", even as we do now."²⁾ "The celestial bodies differ from the terrestrial; each class of bodies God wisely adapted to its own existence."³⁾ But God did even more than this, for "there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory," (v. 41). If God is able to create such a variety of splendor among the various bodies of the universe , giving to each one

1) Meyer -- Commentary on the N. T.-I. and II. Corinthians
p. 375-376

2) Zorn - Die Korintherbriefe, p. 150

3) J. T. Mueller - Con. Theol. Monthly, Vol. I. p. 270

just such characteristics as it needs to fill its place in God's creation, is He then not also able to give to our earthly bodies those qualities which they will need in the resurrection life?

d. Conclusion Paul draws from these analogies
~~down~~ The conclusion which Paul draws from these analogies is this: "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is a spiritual body.(v. 42-44)" The "sowing" (v. 42) is a reference to the interment of the body after death. This is clear from the preceding context where Paul ^{proves} ~~proves~~ that the body must die and decay before it will be raised, even as a seed buried in the earth dies and decays before a new plant comes forth (v. 36).

Now, he says, the body of ^aChristian "is sown in dishonor... and in weakness." The body which we bury has little intrinsic value, it is practically worthless to those who are still living. It is weak and helpless. It cannot prevent its being buried nor can it in any way check the decomposition which sets in as soon as the soul has left it. All power is gone from the limbs and organs. This characteristic, however, shall not be present in the resurrection body. For Paul says: "It is raised in glory.... and in power." This body will be in a state of outward

glory as was Christ's body after His resurrection. It will no longer be restricted in its movements and actions as it is now. Moreover it will be "endowed with fulness of strength for life and activity."¹⁾ It will possess this power at all times, never showing any signs of weakness. It will not be necessary to sustain this body with food, sleep, and rest. The digestive system will no longer function. Thus altho our resurrection body will be the same body we now possess, it will lose the characteristics of mortality, dishonor, and weakness, and instead will possess immortality, glory, and power. It will be so constituted as to be able to live happily forever and never grow tired or weary of eternal joy and bliss.

Paul sums up all he has said in the words: "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." The meaning of this passage is clear for we have explained the terms on page 35. In conclusion Paul once more emphasizes the fact, that we will indeed possess such a spiritual body. "If there is a natural body, there is a spiritual body," *Ei σωτικός γενίτης γίνεται, τότε καὶ πνευματικός*. The emphasis is here on *σωτικός*. If the one exists, the other one cannot be non-existent. "The logical correctness of the sentence, again, depends upon the presupposition(v. 42f.) that the present and the future body

1) Meyer -- Commentary on the N. T. - I. and II. Corinthians.

stand in the relation of counterparts to each other. If therefore there exists a physical body (and that is the present one), then a pneumatic body also must be no mere idea, but really existent (and that is the resurrection body).¹⁾

NOTE:

A brief remark must be made concerning those Christians who will be alive at the last Advent of Christ. What will happen to their bodies? Paul tells us: "Behold I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." The bodies of the surviving Christians will also be changed into resurrection bodies before they enter upon eternal life. *Δεῖ γάρ τὸ φυλακτὸν τοῦτο ἐνίσχειν
ἀγάπαιαν καὶ τὸ θυγατρὸν τοῦτο ἐνίσχειν
ἀναράγειν* (v.53). *Δεῖ* it is absolutely necessary, that this be done, before the Christians enter the resurrection life, for in their present state they are not fit to partake of this neverending, perfect joy and blessedness. Paul states this also in verse 50: "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither therefore doth corruption inherit incorruption." A natural body, like our present one would be a complete misfit in heaven. A mortal body cannot partake of ^{the} blessings of immortality.

1) Meyer - Commentary on the N. T. - I. and II. Corinthians

Hence the natural bodies of the believers living on the Last Day must be transformed into spiritual bodies, before they can inherit the kingdom of God.

POLEMICS

Germ of the resurrection body

The transformation of our natural body into the spiritual body is an act which will be performed when we rise from the dead. It does not have its beginning in this life as some errorists would have us believe. They teach that the germ of the resurrection body is implanted in the believers in the Lord's Supper. They argue: Since the very body of Christ is eaten in this Sacrament it must have some effect on the recipient. It must produce the first step of the transformation of the natural body into the spiritual. It so to speak implants the seed or germ of the resurrection body in the believer. Luther is even accused of having taught this false doctrine. Luther stated that the Lord's Supper assures us of our resurrection unto life.¹⁾ By this he meant merely that the Lord's Supper assures us of the forgiveness of our sins, and since our sins are removed, all spiritual blessings are ours, also the certainty of a resurrection from the dead.²⁾

1) Luther - St. Louis Edition , Vol. XX, p. 831

2) Pieper - Vol. III, p. 132-133

This erroneous speculation of man is also rejected by St. Paul in I. Corinthians 15, 44, where he states emphatically: "It is sown a natural body." The body of the Christian laid to rest in a natural body, the one which was adapted only to life in this world. It has as yet no single quality of the resurrection body. Neither does Scripture anywhere give the slightest indication that the eating of Christ's body will change or affect the nature of our physical body. Hence this theory is a fiction, unscriptural and antiscriptural.

Doctrine of resurrection is unreasonable

The Scriptural doctrine of the resurrection of our present body from the dead has always been, is still, and will continue to be denied because it is unreasonable to finite man. Modern unbelief has produced statements such as these: President Giffert said: "Many Christians, because the life after death lies beyond the range of experimental proof (and they no longer accept the authority of Scripture), have grown indifferent about it (immortality)."¹⁾ Prof. Henry C. Vendder of Crozer Theol. Sem. says: "There may be such a place (heaven); nobody can prove that there is not. But neither can the preachers prove that there is such a place. There is no adequate

1) The American Journal of Theology, 1916, p. 325

ground for their confident assertions."¹⁾ "Considered from the viewpoint of modernism which denies the authority of the Scriptures, Professor Vedder is right. Unless God has answered these questions for us in His Word, we must confess to ignorance concerning these things."²⁾ If we would have no other light than our own reason, we would have to confess: "I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All ~~g~~ to unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?"(Eccl. 3, 18-21) But thanks be to God who has proved the fact of our future resurrection to us in First Corinthians. He has done even more. He has shown us that to a certain extent it is even reasonable to believe the resurrection of the body and that it is unreasonable, foolish, to reject the doctrine of the resurrection of the body unto life. The wonderful ways of God in creating and preserving this universe, in propa-

1) Horsch - Modern Religious Liberalism, p. 214 who quotes it from The Baptist Believer of April, 1920 which quoted it from Chester News

2) Horsch - Modern Religious Liberalism, p. 214

gating all his creatures, ^tanimate and inanimate, is ample proof that the resurrection of our body unto life is, so to speak, only a small matter for Him. He must merely do for man what he has been doing for many of his other creatures since the creation of the world. If a chemist thru analysis can determine the original component parts of a substance already greatly decomposed, surely God can perform a similar act and gather all the original particles which once formed the body of a human being and bring them together into the same body thru his omnipotence, and omniscience.¹⁾ Bold blasphemous statements of unbelievers, such as we have quoted, denying the resurrection, dare not weaken our faith in this gloriously comforting doctrine.

IV. When will they be raised?--At Christ's second coming

Having shown how the dead will be raised, Paul also gives an indication as to the time of this great event. Paul tells us what must come to pass before the resurrection can take place and also describes some of the accompanying circumstances and events. We heard already that the believers will rise at the coming of Christ. "They that are Christ's at His coming," (v. 23). Thruout this First Epistle to the Corinthians Paul frequently reminds the Christians that the consummation of their Christian

1) Synodal-Berichte, California-Nevada, 1907, p. 20

life will take place at the Second Coming of Christ.

I. Corinthians 1,7,8: "So that ye come behind in no gift: waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." Chapter 4, verse 5: "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."

I Corinthians 11, 26: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." This whole matter is brought out in greater detail in 15th chapter.

A. When Christ will deliver the members of the Kingdom of Grace to His heavenly Father

Verse 23 speaks of the raising of the believers at Christ's coming. Then Paul continues: *Ἐττα τὸ τέλος,
ὅτε παραδοθεῖται βασιλεία τῷ Ιησῷ καὶ πατρὶ.*
To τέλος is naturally the end of the world (for false interpretation of τέλος and στιχ cf. paragraph on polemics at end of this section.).¹⁾ Soon after the Christians rise from the dead the world will be destroyed. At this time also Christ will deliver the Kingdom to God the Father.

1) Con. Theol. Monthly Vol. III, p. 583

What kingdom is here meant? The only possibility is the Kingdom of Grace, for Christ will retain the rule in the Kingdom of power together with the Father and the Spirit also after the end of the world. And in the Kingdom of glory, which only begins for the Christian at that time, will be ruled by the three persons of the Triune God, as we shall soon see. But the Kingdom of Grace was given to Christ in a special way. In this Kingdom He is to rule over His believers, to guide them in all truth and bring them safely into the portals of heaven. On the Last Day He will have completed this work and can deliver, "turn over," all of His subjects to His heavenly Father and say: Here are those whom you have given Me and for whom I have provided during their earthly life. Christ's special office of Reconciler and Mediator between God and man will come to an end.¹⁾ He will continue to rule over His believers also in the Kingdom of Glory, but not in the special capacity of Mediator. Only the mode of His ruling will be changed. When the time has come for Jesus to deliver all His saints to His heavenly Father, then the believers will be raised to life eternal. Paul depicts some of the details of the resurrection in verse 52.

1) Con. Theol. Monthly Vol. III, p. 584

B. At the sound of the last trumpet , in a moment "We shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed,"(v. 51,52). At the sound of the Lord's trumpet the dead will come forth out of their graves already clothed with immortality. The trumpet of the Lord may be the trumpets that announce His coming or the voice of Christ Himself or possibly both. At the same moment all living Christians will be changed, they will be glorified and thus be able to appear before the judgment seat of Christ together with their fellow-Christians who have arisen. Neither the resurrection of the dead nor the glorifying of the living is a slow process, which takes place over an extended period of time. All of this will take place "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," in the shortest period of time of which we can conceive. It will be an immediate, sudden transformation from death unto life, from time into eternity. From that moment on we will be freed from all earthly shackles. "No fear, no woe shall dim that hour That manifests the Savior's power." (Luth. Hymnal 540 v.3) One of the blessed accompanying circumstances of our resurrection will be,that at that time all of Christ's enemies will have been destroyed. Our resurrection proves that Christ's enemies no longer have any power over Him nor over any of His subjects.

C. When Christ will have destroyed all His enemies

When Christ delivers the Kingdom of Grace to His heavenly Father "He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet (v. 24b, 25)." Christ must rule in the Kingdom of Grace until He, God the Father, will have completely subjected all the enemies of Christ and His church to His Son, Christ. Until this time Christ must (*σει*) rule His Church according to the divine plan of Salvation. But as soon as the rule of Christ in the Kingdom of Grace will come to an end, the rule of the enemies of Christ in the kingdom of Satan will also be ended.¹⁾ The enemies of the Church will not be totally destroyed, i.e. annihilated, but, as Paul explains in v. 24, they will be incapacitated and entirely subject to Christ. All power, all authority, all ability to rule and to oppose the Kingdom of Christ will be taken away from them. All efforts on their part will be ineffective. Three times the Apostle uses the word *πάσις* in these two verses, to show that not one enemy of Christ is excepted. *Πάσις* permits of no exceptions. All enemies of Christ will be totally impotent.

Christ's enemies are also the enemies of the Christians, as was indicated above. The last and the most terror-instilling enemy of the Christian is death. But even the king of terrors ~~opponent~~ will have been conquered by Christ

¹⁾ Weseloh - Lehre und Wehre, Vol. 30, p. 407

for us. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet." As far as Christ is concerned death has already been conquered, and even over the Christian death has no absolute power. Temporal death is only a sleep for the Christian. But from this sound sleep he will awak^e as soon as the resurrection is accomplished. Now this once powerful enemy can no longer menace any of Christ's saints. Thus all enemies, even the most powerful, death, will have no jurisdiction, no authority or power over those who have died in Christ and have risen to eternal life, for "All ($\pi\acute{a}r\tau\alpha$) things hath He (God the Father) put under His (Christ's) feet," (v.25).

We just heard that $\pi\acute{a}r\tau\alpha$ permits of no exceptions. But in verse 27 Paul himself makes an exception. He says: "But when He saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him." The Father makes all things subject to the Son, but He excludes Himself. God the Father is not subject to the Son in any way. This is really not an exception to $\pi\acute{a}r\tau\alpha$, but is only ^a natural result of the action of the Father, namely, of placing all things under the jurisdiction of His Son. If He is the cause of subjecting all things to His Son, He certainly will not "lower Himself" to this level. The divine rulership of Christ given Him by His father, extends over $\tau\alpha\pi\acute{a}r\tau\alpha$,

namely, all creatures. Thus God the Father is not included in this statement.

Now we come to a statement of the Holy Writer which has already caused a great deal of controversy in the militant Church. In verse 28 we read: "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him." This verse takes us back to verse 24, where we saw that Christ will deliver His Kingdom of Grace to His Father. Since He (Christ) is the Head of this Kingdom, and united with His subjects thru the mystical union, He Himself will also be subjected to His Father together with all Christians.

Calov correctly states that the delivering of the Kingdom to the Father includes two things, the praesentatio electorum as well as the resignatio regiminis.¹⁾ This is not to be a forceful subjection, but rather a willing one, for Paul says: "Christ Himself will be subject." Αὐτὸς with *νησταγόεται* (indicative mood of second future) indicates willingness, free from all compulsion on the part of Christ. It is not to be understood in such a way, that the Son is hereby made inferior to the Father, but it is to be explained thus: Originally God had placed Christ at the head of the Kingdom of Grace. To govern the subjects of this Kingdom, the Christians, was a "duty" given especially to Christ. The believers were held responsible directly

1) Quoted in Lehre und Wehre, Vol. 40, p. 134

to Christ, their Head. To rule in this Kingdom was, so to speak, a special prerogative of Christ. But when the believers all leave this Kingdom of Grace and enter the Kingdom of glory, they will no longer be subject in a special sense to Christ. "Vor dem Juengsten Tage herrscht Christus, dem alles uebergeben ist, mit goettlicher Gewalt, aber unsichtbar, durch Mittel, durch einen Herrschaftsapparat.

Nach dem Juengsten Tage ist dieser Herrschaftsapparat abgetan, und die klare Gottheit durchdringt unmittelbar alles." 1) Christ will relinquish this prerogative and thus subject Himself to the Father, so that from then on the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit will rule in the Kingdom of Glory. All three persons of the one eternal, inseparable God will be worshiped and adored without distinction. Thus the absolute sovereignty of God will be emphasized in the Kingdom of Glory. Paul also states that this is the purpose of Christ's subjecting Himself to the Father: "Ταῦτα δέ
νέος πάρεστι πάντας. The πάντας obviously are all those with God, the resurrected believers. To them, in them God will be all. The Apostle does not say that Christ will subject Himself to the Father in order that God the Father may be supreme, all in all. It is with a distinct purpose that he uses δέ νέος, God, the Triune God, the Supreme Essence. He will be all in all. To glorify and praise this Triune God will be the only desire and occupation of the saints.

1) Pieper, Christliche Dogmatik, Vol. II, p.469, Note: 1088

Thus after Christ has destroyed all His enemies, He will sound the trumpet call for the resurrection of the believers, and then deliver them unto His Father. In doing so He will willingly also subject Himself to His Father, so that the Triune God may be all in all the saints of heaven.

POLEMICS

Chiliasm

Chiliasts or Millennialists try to prove their doctrine of two distinct resurrections -- some even distinguish three -- from verses 23 and 24: "But every ^{man} in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward (εἰςτι) they that are Christ's at His coming. Then (εἰτι) cometh the end when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God." Christ of course was the first to rise. Here all agree. The next, and really the first resurrection of which they speak, will be that of the believers. They alone will arise at Christ's coming. Having been raised from the dead they will live with Christ here upon earth for a thousand years, enjoying peace and prosperity. Εἰτι τὸ τέλος, "Then cometh the end." Εἰτι, they say, corresponds to the preceding εἰςτι (afterward), and "Introduces a considerable interval" of time.¹⁾ In τὸ τέλος they then find the second resurrection, namely, that of the unbelievers. But εἰτι simply means "then, next".

1) Weidner, quoted in C.T.M. Vol.VI. No.4 p. 253

A certain period of time may elapse between the resurrection of the believers and the end, but ~~surely~~^y surely would not be used to designate a thousand years! Furthermore, in $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\circ s$ there is not even a hint at another resurrection. It is simply the end, the end of the world. Arbitrarily the Chiliasts insert their idea of a second resurrection of unbelievers into the word $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\circ s$.

Moreover St. Paul says in verse 52 that the dead shall be raised and the living changed "At the last trump." This will really be the last trumpet, not one sounded a thousand years before the end! We note also that nothing intervenes between the sounding of the last trumpet and the resurrection of the believers. Immediately upon the resurrection follows the final consummation, (verses 53-57), "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory thru our Lord Jesus Christ!" Not only can chiliastic doctrines not be proved from I Corinthians 15, but these teachings are refuted by the very passages in this great resurrection chapter, which they *opponents* cite as proof for their ingenious inventions concerning the millennium.

Having considered various angles of the resurrection unto life, let us now see what God's purpose is in raising us from the dead? Why are we going to be raised?

V. For what purpose will they be raised? -- To live with God and to sing His praises forever in heaven.

The purpose of our resurrection is indeed the most comforting article of this entire doctrine. God's design in raising us from the dead is not to punish us for our sins but to give us that victory over Satan, sin, and death procured for us by His Son. Paul says that when we "Shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory!'" (v.54). The last sentence is a quotation from Isa. 25,8. No longer will death have any power over us! Death is swallowed up, vanquished, completely destroyed. Instead of being bound eternally by the chains of death we can enjoy the freedom of eternal life. As our body now is subject to death, so it will then be filled with the life won for us by Christ; and we together with all the saints will sing the anthem of victory: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory thru our Lord Jesus Christ!" (v.55-57).

Paul here breaks forth into a hymn of exultation. The doctrine of the resurrection unto life is such a vital issue with him, that he imagines himself already present at this momentous occasion. Triumphant he defies death to harm him! The sting of death is ineffective now. Death has lost its hold on the believers. It is deprived of the victory

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it expected to gain. Also all the allies of death lie on the battle field mortally wounded, no longer able to molest and to tempt those who have arisen. "The sting of death;" the instrument with which death inflicted its telling blows, "Is sin." Every sin is a death sentence. "And the strength of sin is the law." Sin receives its power to condemn a man to death from the law of God, which says: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die!" (Ezek.18,4). But after the resurrection neither sin nor God's law can condemn us, because Christ has gained the victory over these enemies and has given His victory to us. "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory thru our Lord Jesus Christ."

Incidentally this also shows that we will rise with the same bodies we now have. For if our present bodies would not rise, but would remain in the grave, and a new body substituted, then we could not sing: "Death is swallowed up in victory." For death would then have been victorious!

The intention of God in raising us from the dead, then, is to bring us closer to Him, to let us live and commune with Him in the heavenly mansions He has prepared for us, in this place of never-ending joy and bliss, from which death and everything perishable is forever banished. This concludes our study of St. Paul's presentation of the doctrine of the resurrection unto life. Let us then look at this doctrine once more and see what specific applications of these truths we can make.

VI. What practical applications may we draw from these truths

A. The joy of our resurrection

The doctrine of the resurrection unto life should first of all be a source of comfort and joy to us, because it assures us of our resurrection and that of our loved ones who have fallen asleep in the Lord. It is impossible for us to picture the joys of heaven to ourselves as they really will be. We do, however, get certain glimpses of this joy from Holy Scripture. St. John e.g. tells us : "God Himself shall be with them (the resurrected believers) and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be anymore pain; for the former things are past away," (Rev. 21,4). God will be with us. This will be even a closer relation to God than the one which now exists between Him and His people. For we shall have a spiritual body, which will be able to see God face to face and to commune with Him. All sorrow, bitterness, and death will be absent. All disfigurements, imperfections, and deformities of this life will be healed. The crippled will be restored to sound health; perfect joy and peace will be our lot. What a glorious goal for which to strive! If we will keep it always in mind we will not mourn at the graves of our loved ones as those who have no hope, but will

rather rejoice that another soul has been privileged to take the first step toward this goal, by being relieved of all earthly sorrow. Yes, and when the hour for our departure comes we will not be reluctant to leave this life, nor tremble at the thought of death, but in peace and tranquility we will gladly place our souls in our Savior's hands and breathe a prayer of thanks to God that He has at last brought us to that last night of rest before we will awake to find ourselves in the presence of our risen Savior "who has redeemed us to God by His blood," (Rev. 5, 9). Thus the joy of our resurrection will strengthen us in our last moments and will assure us of a blessed sleep in the arms of Jesus until the Day of Resurrection.

B. The perfection of our justification thru Christ's
death and resurrection

The fact that God will raise us from the dead proves also that we are completely justified by the death and resurrection of Christ. Eternal life is promised only to those whose sins are forgiven. We have no reason to fear that Christ did not suffer enough to pay for the debt of our sin nor that His life on earth was not holy and perfect enough to be an adequate substitute for our sinful life, because God has promised to raise us from the dead. By such a promise He shows that the life and the sacrifice of His Son were all-sufficient to atone for our

sins. If they were not, He could not raise us from the dead and remain a just God. As it was impossible for Christ to remain dead, so it is also impossible for those, for whom He died, to remain in the grave. As the Scriptures concerning Christ were fulfilled, so also the Scriptures concerning the Christians must and will be fulfilled.¹⁾ Thus the doctrine of the resurrection unto life is another proof of the perfection of our justification thru Christ's death and resurrection. God gives us this assurance in many different ways, so that we will never doubt it, but firmly cling to it, trust in it until we shall draw our last breath.

C. Strength to lead a sanctified life

The doctrine of the resurrection unto life is also one of the greatest incentives to sanctification. In chapter 6, verses 14 and 15 Paul says: "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid." The fact that we are members of Christ and that we know that we shall one day live in the presence of our Savior will give us power and strength to withstand the ^aonslights of Satan. For how can we use our eyes, the very eyes which will some day behold the Savior in all His glory, to look at filthy and suggestive

1) Ebeling - Der Menschheit Zukunft, p. 71

pictures, to read pornographic literature, or to see risque plays! How can our ears, the very organs that will here the Hallelujahs of the heavenly hosts after our resurrection, how can they be attuned to songs, which are an abomination unto the Lord! How can our lips and our vocal organs, with which we will sing the praises of our God, be here polluted by foul curses, angry words, by smutty and ribald jests? Will we use our bodies for fornication and all manner of uncleanness, when we realize that these very bodies of ours will stand in the presence of our glorified Redeemer? No, the thought of our resurrection unto life will prevent us from placing our body or any of its members in the service of sin.¹⁾

A consciousness of this doctrine does give us not only the ability, but also the willingness to abstain from sin. The thought of offending our Savior with sin will fill our hearts with shame, so that we will gladly refrain from committing a wrong. If this were not so, a Christian would be a living contradiction. How could he here on earth love sin, the very evil from which he hopes to be freed in the life to come?²⁾ No, the Christian will not love sin, because the doctrine of the resurrection unto life gives him the ability, gladly and willingly to forsake the path of the transgressor and to walk the way

1) Synodal-Berichte, Nebraske, 1904, L. W. Dorn, p. 60

2) Ibid. p. 57

of life.

D. Increased zeal for the work of the Kingdom, if we
are fully conscious of this doctrine

What could be a greater incentive to a pastor or a layman to work with heart and soul for the extension of the Kingdom of Christ, than the thought that the unfathomable joy of the resurrection life is within reach of all men and that we who know of this joy are not only able and privileged to bring it to those who have never heard of it, but that we are the only persons who can do so. How can we let this opportunity slip by unnoticed and unheeded? Our genuine joy over our own resurrection will create enthusiasm for intensive mission work. It will be an inducement to carry the Gospel of the cross and the empty grave to the masses of the unchurched in our own country and abroad. Let us take to heart the words of encouragement of St. Paul in verse 58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." "Steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord!" O what divine blessings would be showered upon our church work, if it would always be done in this spirit. Let us not waver in our undertakings, work only half-heartedly, or even stop working altogether at times! No, we must be steadfast, unmoveable,

always abounding in the Lord's work. And surely this is not asking too much, if we consider the glorious promise God has given us: "Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." How often do we not begin certain projects without knowing whether they will come to a successful conclusion? How often are our efforts fruitless and in vain! But here we have the never-failing promise of God that our efforts on behalf of the work of the Lord are not going to be in vain. On the contrary, they are going to bear fruit, just because they are expended for the Lord. With His blessing resting on our feeble efforts, we cannot stop or go backward, but must press forward into new fields and work without ceasing until we have reached the goal, immortality. Let us heed especially the warning this passage gives us in regard to those near and dear to us.

Let us see to it above all that those of our ^{own} household are one with us in faith for: "Nur das Christentum vereinigt die Familie auf ewig."¹⁾ Then on that glorious Day of Resurrection we will join the angelic hosts and sing the praises of our Redeemer forever and ever. Eternity will "be spent" in glorifying God, in magnifying His holy name, and praising His boundless love whereby He has redeemed us. This is the final object of the resurrection unto life.

The doctrine of the resurrection unto life--what an in-

1) Synodal-Berichte, Nebraska, 1904, p. 61

centive to a true Christian pastor! Here the glory of the Gospel ministry is revealed! To pastors especially is given the undeserved privilege of leading the heathen, still groping in darkness, to the light of their glorified and risen Redeemer. May this doctrine therefore be a stimulus, an inspiration for more extensive, more earnest, more consecrated mission work. To this end may God bless our Gospel ministry!

The doctrine of the resurrection unto life has always been and will continue to be the hardest of all doctrines to believe, simply because it contradicts experience. Such an event as a corpse coming to life, is not an everyday occurrence. But the fact that we have not seen this phenomenon occur does not prove to us that it did not occur, for we have seen that there is incontrovertible evidence for the fact that Christ rose from the dead.

This doctrine is, as we have also seen, intensely practical. It influences the Christians entire life, his whole "Weltanschauung." It is the object of his faith. If there were no resurrection from the dead Christianity would be just a delusion, nothing more than a heathen cult.

Most comforting of all, however, the resurrection unto life is definitely established in Scripture. Paul corroborates his statements in the New Testament with quotations from the Old Testament. God took into con-

sideration the fact that this is the most difficult of all doctrines to believe when He had His Holy Scribes write the books of the Bible. He has in His Word given us more proof and evidence for the truth of this doctrine than for any other. Let us then not foolishly reject this overwhelming testimony, but accept it in true faith and let it constantly be before our mind's eye, so that its practical applications will not be lost upon us.