



# THE SPRINGFIELDER

January 1975  
Volume 39, Number 1

# The Resurrection of the Dead:

## 1 Corinthians 15 and Its Interpretation

MANFRED KWIRAN

*The author, a Missouri Synod Pastor, holds a doctor's degree from the University of Basel and will be lecturer with the rank of instructor at the universities of Würzburg and Göttingen in the coming semester.*

DURING A CERTAIN SEGMENT of the church year the church focuses her attention on the Easter story. A careful scrutiny of our Easter celebrations makes one wonder whether or not we are still in the tradition of the early Church. Christians were tortured and burned because of their faith in the Resurrected Christ in A.D. 64. The Colosseum of ancient Rome is but one reminder of subsequent persecutions. The Resurrected Christ was their Lord. Their everyday life was permeated with the resurrection reality and perspective. Their church services, held not only on Sundays but every day, celebrated Christ's victory over death and devil. And it is not astonishing that our "earliest evidence for Christians in Rome comes from cemeteries . . . Jews and Christians did not favor cremation, probably because of their views concerning the resurrection of the dead. Instead they buried their dead in underground chambers which for convenience were turned into galleries or catacombs."<sup>1</sup> The early Christians had just as much or little evidence of the resurrection as we have today—unless they were among those to whom the Risen Christ had appeared. Yet many went into death with joy and understood that "the kingdom of God is where Jesus Christ is"—in all its fulness of meaning.<sup>2</sup>

One of the earliest creedal formulations of the church is recorded in St. Paul's correspondence with the Corinthians. The "greatest apostle and theologian of early Christendom"<sup>3</sup> presents not his own will and speculation but his Lord's commission. He is but an "instrument of the Risen Lord."<sup>4</sup> St. Paul himself points out that he only passes on what he has received. It is quite evident from historical data that it was not Paul who first saw the significance of the death of Christ *and* the significance of the resurrection, but he passes on what he has received and is in line with the thought of the original congregation.<sup>5</sup> Since St. Paul does not add explanatory notes before presenting this creed, he seems to take for granted that it was familiar to the Christians at Corinth. He even states that "I delivered to you . . . what I also received." This means that "from the very first the Christian community was acknowledging the Lordship of Christ."<sup>6</sup> For the identification of Christ as Lord depends upon the actuality of the resurrection event. "The Lord is risen" was the church's confession from its earliest days.<sup>7</sup> After St. Paul has presented the creed which speaks of the resurrection of Christ and has supplied a list of the appearances as "evidence," he continues with an explanation of the resurrection by referring to analogies in nature and concludes

with a discussion of the "resurrection body" as a glorified and transformed and radically new dimension of eternal life. "At the same time, however, by drawing such a sharp contrast (Christ raised, the dead not raised) he implies that the erring Christians are doing violence to the Christian faith."<sup>8</sup>

Richard R. Niebuhr gives his estimate of this chapter by pointing out that "Paul's warning to the Corinthians is probably the most concise expression of the self-admonitory mood in which modern Protestant theologians reflect on resurrection."<sup>9</sup> However, in an essay entitled "The Easter Message as the Essence of Theology" (1962), Walther Kuenneth of the University of Erlangen rightly pointed out that the "basic thesis that the Easter message is of the essence of theology is by no means self-evident."<sup>10</sup> Kuenneth stated that in the history of Christian thought the resurrection has often been treated like a step-child, "remained unclarified," "contested," even sometimes "attacked," and in the practical sphere neglected more often than not, if not denied. Preachers from the pulpits often said too much, not showing man's limitation in speaking of this new event in history, or they said too little as if embarrassed by this very key to Christian hope.

Such hesitation about the resurrection of Jesus, and consequently of the dead, was especially characteristic of leading German Protestant theologians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Their attitude to 1 Corinthians 15 is of particular significance in this context. Let us briefly look at some German Protestant theologians who seem to have influenced the theological discussion not only of their own day, but also of later generations. Our study of modern rejections of the reality of Christ's resurrection has to begin with Ferdinand Christian Baur. He gave the real impetus to historical-critical Pauline studies, and his method, though now in many ways modified, is still being used. We shall conclude with W. Kuenneth, who already early in his career (1930) was convinced that theology is only Pauline and Christian if it is "resurrection theology."

F. Chr. Baur (1792-1860) represents the systematic-historical view of the New Testament. He is the father of the historical-critical theology and has directly or indirectly shaped German theology of the twentieth century. Baur began his critical work with the Apostle Paul, and it can be assumed that this is where Pauline research has its start. No serious scholar has done research since Baur in the Pauline corpus without being influenced by Baur's thorough investigations. Baur considers the resurrection of utmost importance for theology. "Nur das Wunder der Auferstehung konnte die Zweifel zerstreuen . . ."<sup>11</sup> (Only the miracle of the resurrection could remove doubts.) If we expected a "reasonable" solution to the concept, placing it into the whole system of reality of the nineteenth century world-view, we see now that Baur seems to be willing to break the system, the compact and limited world-view. The resurrection phenomenon had become for the early Christians one of "uttermost certainty." Baur speaks of it in a sentence which is so similar to Bultmann's formulation that one cannot help but see the latter's dependence on Baur as to the resurrection's interpretation. Says Baur: "What is the necessary presupposition for history for everything else that follows is not the

facticity of the resurrection of Jesus itself, but rather the faith in the resurrection."<sup>12</sup> Bultmann states in *Kerygma und Mythos*: "The Easter-event as the resurrection of Christ is not an historical event; as historical event only the Easter faith of the first disciples is comprehensible."<sup>13</sup>

Baur himself is not consistent and is willing to deal with something which also for him is outside of the realm of historical research. In a sermon on Judica Sunday (John 12:20-32) he states that through "his resurrection, the Lord continues to live in the community he founded."<sup>14</sup> Says Baur: "We see here how the crucified and risen Lord cannot rightly remain alone, if, like the grain of wheat which falls into the earth and no longer remains a single grain but bears much fruit, he is *risen in his community*, continuing to work and live in it . . . In the members of his community . . . the Lord of the community again and again commemorates the victory of life over death and is glorified in them . . . The more they bear his image in themselves and express it in the entire fullness and multiplicity of its forms, the more he, the Redeemer, lives in all his redeemed and fills and rules them as members of his spirit and body, in order to join them all to the holy building, pleasing to God, which rises up from earth to heaven . . ."<sup>15</sup> That this interpretation of the resurrection already shows us that also here his "system" is guiding him is quite evident. The Baur scholar, Peter Hodgson, rightly points out that "Baur interprets the meaning and significance of the resurrection in this way because he is concerned to *understand* it in *non-supernatural*, nonmiraculous terms, i.e., not as the physical resuscitation of a corpse but rather, as he puts it in a letter to Heyd, in a 'spiritual' sense."<sup>16</sup>

We seem to have returned to the either/or of rationalism and to Lessing's "garstiger Graben" (unbridgeable gap) between faith and reason, and this gap still remains to be bridged. However, Baur seems to do more than the rationalists did; he does not just explain the resurrection away, but presents a new meaning for it (*Umdeutung*). He interprets it and suggests that the resurrection itself might be an interpretative concept. In our day Willi Marxsen has picked up this idea in order to make the resolute claim that the resurrection is a cipher or interpretation of the cross's victory on behalf of the early Church. Baur considers in a positive way the victory over death to be a reality congruent with the natural and historical order. It is an event which brings the principle of life to mankind and overcomes death. Now one may rightly be puzzled. Is this Paul's intention or that of the early Church? Does one need to retain the concept of "resurrection" for what Baur has in mind? Could one not just as well substitute "influence"? The resurrection of Christ presents for Baur historically that which is implicitly possible for all men. But for Paul Christ's resurrection is an historical fact which gives the Christian Church its "positive historical character." The accounts of the appearances are the authentication of the happenedness of Christ's resurrection. For Baur the resurrection would be an historical event only insofar as it is a spiritual process and a life-giving relationship of the human and Divine Spirit (the Trinity is seen in this order: Father,



Spirit, Son). Baur feels that Paul himself shows us how to view the resurrection. According to the Apostle, suggests Baur, the account of the resurrection is not an actual description of the occurrence but it points to the faith-experience: "What the resurrection is in itself lies outside the sphere of historical investigation. Historical consideration has only to hold to the fact that for the faith of the disciples the resurrection of Jesus became the strongest and most incontestable certainty . . . the necessary presupposition of everything that follows is not so much the factuality of the resurrection of Jesus itself, but much more the belief in the same."<sup>17</sup> That this does not say as much as Paul's proclamation seems evident.

Hans Grass emphasized once that for Baur there existed a "deep unpenetrable dark" between Jesus' death and the resurrection faith.<sup>18</sup> Baur also dealt with the conversion experience of Paul in like manner and connected his interpretation of Pauline theology with this experience. Bultmann and others have spoken in a similar way in our century. In his conversion experience, they claim, Paul "saw" as they have "seen" the appearance of the resurrected Christ. Also here Baur rejects the supernatural element and the miraculous and transforms the supernatural into a naturally explainable psychological "process." One tends at first to be amazed at the nineteenth century ability to rationalize which Baur seems to grant to the apostle. For the process of rationalization described is possible only if one has the Pauline manuscripts before one in order to see the various movements. It must not be forgotten that the most that the apostle had was the Old Testament writings and what he heard about the Christians. Thus Baur, on the one hand, seems to impose his own rationality on Paul *only* in order to make his own explanation plausible and logical. After he has accomplished this goal, on the other hand, he lets Paul revert to the level of a primitive Jew who, having mentally experienced something out of the ordinary, is unable to distinguish between external and internal experiences. Baur's Paul seems then to be a great disappointment. The great apostle, on whom all is dependent according to Baur, turns out to be unable to distinguish between a gradually received psychological experience which suddenly came to culmination and an external occurrence. That Baur's Paul is little more than a lunatic with visions—who sees and hears what others do not—is and remains also for Baur a problem. Baur, at this point, more than demythologizes. His student Strauss stated that the powerful influence of Jesus had called forth visions in the disciples and the shamefully crucified Jesus was not lost, but had remained; he had gone through death into his messianic glory. Later Strauss was to refer to the resurrection of Jesus as "humbug." Bultmann is also able to speak of the appearances of Christ as a "falsche Wirklichkeitsdeutung der Jünger" (false interpretation of reality on the part of the disciples).<sup>19</sup>

Baur, to be sure, refers to the conversion of Paul and the appearance of Jesus as real facts. Nevertheless, these "facts," although not necessarily internally produced, occurred only internally, according to Baur.<sup>20</sup> Thus, the Pauline conversion is no more verifiable historically than the resurrection. Again the results of faith and the

action of Paul are the only data with which the historian can work. Baur understands fully that those who cannot believe in a miracle can only assume that the faith in the resurrection proceeded from the spiritual process in the minds of the disciples which followed Jesus' death (*Hineingedacht*).<sup>21</sup> Baur, to be sure, would allow it as entirely possible that the psychological experiences of the disciples were, for the disciples, real appearances of the resurrected Lord. But, according to Baur, whatever one believes, the important point is that one realize that the person of Jesus received utmost significance in the faith of the disciples in the resurrection—whether one views that resurrection as bodily or spiritual.

One would still perhaps want to ask this question: If it were true that Paul experiences something only "internally" and believed it to be "externally," would not this belief have been challenged and opposed as a deception even at that "primitive" time? And, furthermore, does not Paul's account of the appearances, especially the account of the five-hundred, attempt to make a defense against Baur's interpretation? I should think so. Baur has failed to grasp the very intention of the texts. It is highly questionable that Paul was under a delusion; the texts themselves do not suggest anything of the sort. Had Paul meant "seeing" in the way Baur would have us understand, he could easily have written differently, more clearly, and explained it in Baur's terminology. The credibility of Paul and of the other early Christians is here called into question. That this challenge was already raised in Paul's time is shown by Paul's answer to it in 1 Corinthians 15.

In all fairness, we should state that Baur is not willing to psychologize away the resurrection completely, even though he finally leaves the choice with the individual interpreter. He does not really know what to do with this "event" in terms of his nineteenth century world-view. But Baur's understanding that it was nothing but the absolute and certain faith of the disciples in the resurrection which gave the church its start does not exclude the possibility of their self-deception. Since he emphasizes that one cannot historically verify the objective fact of the resurrection nor the reality of the Easter faith, except from their results, faith and disbelief are placed on equal footing and both are now relative. Baur's rejection of the miraculous element of God as Creator seems to guide his interpretation of Pauline theology. And eschatology, although more important for Baur than for Schleiermacher, has not advanced much beyond the Schleiermacherian interpretation of hope for the future. Of this hope without substance Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 15: 19: "If in this life we who are in Christ have only hope, we are of all men most to be pitied." The attachment of hope to the concept of the resurrection which we can see also in Semler occurs in Baur, but the assumptions of Lessing (contradictions among the various resurrection stories; Christ was the first trustworthy and practical teacher of the immortality of the soul . . . trustworthy because of his "resuscitation" after death through which his teachings were safeguarded for mankind) are not rejected, only reiterated in new terminology. Baur has found a new way of presenting eschatology in his theological system, using Pauline ter-

minology, yet robbing it of its strength and substance, of its very intention.<sup>22</sup>

Walter Kuenneth's evaluation of the theological situation seems to be valid also for Baur: "There is that basic indifference with regard to the Easter kerygma representing the conviction that Jesus' resurrection does not belong to the essential and indispensable substance of Christian theology. When it appeared that this message could be disregarded in the preaching of the church, the doctrine of the resurrection was suppressed or removed. This typical line can be traced in theological liberalism from Schleiermacher through Ritschl to Herrmann. These theological schools were interested in entirely different themes."<sup>23</sup> Even Baur's contemporaries realized that he had placed too much emphasis on the humanity of Jesus and too little on His divinity. Ironically enough, it was his student and friend David Friedrich Strauss who provided the most penetrating and severe critique of his work in a letter addressed to Baur on 17 November 1846. Here Strauss compared his own negative criticism with Baur's positive results. "Eine saubere Position das, wird der Waechter [Zion] rufen; der Eine sagt: es ist nicht wahr, der Andere sagt: es ist gelogen und ich weiss den namhaft zu machen, der es erlogen hat: fort mit beiden ins gleiche Loch!" (An interesting situation the watchman of Zion will call it—"One says, 'It is not true.' The other says, 'It is a lie and I know the one who lied.' Away with both into the same abyss").<sup>24</sup> Baur and Strauss fully realized that Paul was thinking in 1 Corinthians 15 of the glorified and resurrected Christ in a real external way and presented the appearances in a fully objective and present way, but this did not force them to understand it objectively. This New Testament hope for the resurrection with its concreteness and reality in the resurrection of Christ was interpreted by Strauss as the sensual longing of the Jews for the days of the Messiah when everything would turn their way. From a historical perspective one could now view the resurrection only as a result of "*Wahnglauben*" (neurotic faith). Strauss had already given his critique of the resurrection appearances in his *Leben Jesu*. In his monograph on Reimarus, his last work, he again underlined his previous conclusions: The disciples had saved the work of their "master" by the fabrication of the concept of the resurrection. It was not necessarily intentional deception, but was surely at least self-deception in "seeing" the Resurrected Christ, giving way finally to legends. Reimarus had suggested that the disciples had stolen the body in order to claim thereafter that he was raised and thus to establish the new faith and their spiritual reign by means of this deception. Strauss considered Reimarus the most "courageous and worthy representative" of eighteenth century theology.<sup>25</sup> "The warning of Reimarus, however, should have been that, while objective historical investigation is essential in letting the sources speak for themselves, there are realities behind the sources that historical method itself is not able to disclose. The historian must know the limitations of his method."<sup>26</sup> Strauss himself, in a letter of 22 July 1846 confessed that he was not a historian: "My whole work is the result of dogmatic/anti-dogmatic interest."<sup>27</sup> In his early writings Strauss still held to Christ as one great moral teacher among



others. Re-examination of the Gospels, however, "forced" him to question even this view of Jesus, because he could not understand how one could hold, on the one hand, that Christ's resurrection was a fabrication and, on the other hand, trust the moral teachings transmitted by the disciples. Rejecting the reality of Christ's resurrection, Strauss suggested a "new Faith"—world evolutionism. Man should be thankful that he could be part of the machine of the universe, even if only for a brief time, and should stop asking of the after-life. J. B. Phillips has set forth concisely the dilemma which Strauss clearly saw confronting him: "Many people, who have not read the Gospels since childhood, imagine that they can quite easily detach the 'miraculous' element of the Resurrection and still retain Christ as an Ideal, as the best Moral Teacher the world has ever known—and all the rest. But the Gospels, all four of them, bristle with supernatural claims on the part of Christ, and unless each man is going to constitute himself a judge of what Christ said and what He did not say (which is not far from every man being his own evangelist), it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that He believed Himself to be God and spoke therefore with quite unique authority. Now if He believed thus and spoke thus and failed to rise from the dead, He was, without question, a lunatic. He was quite plainly a young idealist suffering from *folie de grandeur* on the biggest possible scale, and cannot on that account be regarded as the World's Greatest Teacher. No Mahomet or Buddha or other great teacher ever came within miles of making such a shocking boast about himself . . . If He did not in fact rise, His claim was false, and He was a very dangerous personality indeed."<sup>28</sup> In all fairness, we should state that Strauss wrestled with the texts before him, but finally concluded that they were untrue.

In our own century, Barth and Bultmann followed in the course charted by their predecessors Schleiermacher and Ritschl. They desired to reform and create a theology which would be independent and yet true to the essentials of revelation or religion. The first eschatological works of Barth show him as still a consistent and radical student of W. Herrmann. Herrmann's understanding of the resurrection and the fatherhood of God spoke of a dualism of faith and history. In his pre-critical period (1916-1919) Barth differentiates between general history and the history of revelation; eternity breaks into time. In 1920 Barth dismisses the immanent evolutionism of Troeltsch and states that God is not satisfied to be other-worldly over against the this-worldly: "He desires to engulf all this-worldly into the other-worldly."<sup>29</sup> A similar point is made in his discussion of 1 Corinthians 15. But again, he seems to change after 1930 and returns to Troeltsch's terminology: "Promise," "Time-Fulfillment." In the "crisis of theology" period (1920-24) Barth changes the understanding of eschatology to a timeless symbol of existential venture (*Wagnis*) and one listens for the last trumpet. This we still see being done today by Bultmann. With the Kierkegaardian background of "sickness unto death," the resurrection dawns in a new light. Barth again distinguishes between God's history and our history and behind this hypothesis is his concept of eternity: resurrection is for him eternity.



The resurrection of Christ, or what is the same, the second coming of Christ, is not an historical event. The resurrection is not an appearance in our time and thus no event in our history. It is instead identical with the *parousia* beyond all time.<sup>50</sup> For Barth in his interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15 last *things* are not really *last*. Barth speaks of that which is the basis for everything. The thought of eternity is not foreign to scripture. Toward this goal everything is directed, and somewhere the high wall of eternity is placed where God is finally all in all.

Barth suggests that we dismiss the idea of futurity and re-interpret Paul in the light of the way in which Paul saw a definite end as well as a concluding act to history. For Barth even of the biggest catastrophe one can only state that the end is near. By means of the word "resurrection," the proclamation sets forth the origin and truth of all that is. It does not set forth something which we are not and never shall be or something which we might someday become, but the origin of all that is, the reality of all *res*, the eternity of time—the resurrection of the dead. Death is not the last word. The dead is what we are. The resurrection is what we are not. But this is precisely that with which we are concerned when we speak of the resurrection of the dead; that which we are not is now identified with that which we are. The dead are alive, time is eternity, being is truth, and things are real. But all this is given to us in hope and is not to be manifested in its full identity; some futurity is left. The reminder of death has the message of the resurrection behind it. It is a reminder to that life in our life which we do not live and which is nevertheless our life. Also in Barth's *Church Dogmatics* he considers the resurrection of Christ as something new, but also only a revelation now of that which already always was. The resurrection of the dead is for the apostle not part of truth, but rather the truth of which he speaks as gospel itself. When Bultmann holds the opinion that for Paul the resurrection is nothing but the meaningfulness of the cross, Barth opposes this view by speaking of the resurrection as a separate event from the cross and as a new deed of God.<sup>51</sup>

The appearances are for Barth the real Easter-event. In his later writings Barth is also able to speak of the resurrection as an event in time and space and as a real occurrence, but not historically comprehensible because of its "pre-historic" character. The resurrection for Barth occurred as special history in the midst of general human history in concrete objectivity. Barth in his interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15, as well as in *Romans* and later works, again and again asserts that the resurrection of Christ and the dead "is not history but belongs in the realm above history." Death can be understood as "history," but the resurrection cannot be grasped in this manner. It seems to me, however, that to understand fully Jesus' death would be just as impossible as to understand his resurrection and that in Paul we notice no such differentiation, but both death and resurrection are spoken of as being like "facts."

While Barth seems to have a futuristic aspect in his eschatological views, Bultmann's existential interests seem to have reduced the Pauline futuristic eschatology to a never-ending eschatological exist-

ence. Bultmann's interest forces a "proof" of *God's existing* rather than *existence*, and it is in this respect that we feel his "eschatology" is devoid of futuristic content and remains "eschatological existence"—always existing. The future of man is the fulfillment of man's authentic existence in which the question of man's existence is taken seriously and asked. Eschatology has here lost any sense of futurity as goal of history and becomes the goal of the individual self-understanding. The futuristic element of Paul has become for Bultmann inseparable from man's existence but is now a deciding factor in life itself. This remains finally the only reason why Bultmann cannot consequently eliminate eschatology itself. Minear has presented two norms by which Bultmann views "ancient" eschatological reports: "The first norm is a negative one and might be phrased as follows: an eschatological viewpoint is non-valid and must be rejected to the degree that it embodies cosmological ingredients. A cosmological eschatology is per se mythological. It inevitably confuses history with nature and reduces human existence to the realm of cosmic objectivity. The second norm is positive: an eschatology is valid to the degree that it produces and is in accord with 'the complete genuine historicity of man.'" <sup>32</sup>

For Barth the resurrection is futuristic for us in that we can only hope in the grace of God who already has shown his grace to our Lord Jesus Christ. As the resurrection occurs, according to Barth, at each man's death (eternalizing), it is a gift of God. Man is moved from time to eternity. Barth defends the centrality of the resurrection in Christian theology, but fails to affirm a personal faith in the bodily resurrection.<sup>33</sup> Bultmann's re-interpretation considers Pauline cosmic eschatology myth which needs to be demythologized. Over against Barth he pointed out that Paul meant 1 Corinthians 15 to be understood historically, but then concluded that Paul made a mistake and that the real resurrection chapter is not chapter 15, but 13. "The resurrection cannot be a proving miracle because (a) it is unbelievable, (b) witnesses can not prove it, and most important (c) because it is itself an object of faith and one object of faith cannot prove another."<sup>34</sup> The result of Bultmann's re-interpretation, demythologization, and de-historization has been that the historical and futuristic aspect of Pauline concrete futuristic eschatology has received a radical reduction. Man lives and is resurrected already insofar as his self-understanding has been and is realized by the existential encounter—an existential resurrection. Tenney can therefore rightly say: "If the language of the New Testament means only that the truth of resurrection was expressed as a phenomenon to make it intelligible for the mentality of the first century, what guarantee . . . that his [Bultmann's] is more valid?" <sup>35</sup>

Even if the New Testament should use mythical and apocalyptic terminology, it must be maintained that God's Word shatters myths by virtue of its very nature as revelation.<sup>36</sup> To slight the revelatory character of the Pauline corpus would mean that the apostle was enslaved to environmental factors. If one reads the texts closely one notices how radically the New Testament writers break through their environmental conceptions. If this were not so, then we could indeed

speaking of Christianity as one religion among many, and everything would have become relative.

Walter Kuenneth has shown a definite concern that the New Testament documents and their claim to be revelation should be taken seriously at face value: "Without the resurrection there would be no New Testament."<sup>37</sup> Kuenneth sees his work as "resurrection theology" and has a tendency to over-emphasize the resurrection at the expense of the cross. But whether one agrees with him in his special "resurrection" emphasis in all its details or not, he does seem to be asking the question which is crucial according to the words of the Apostle Paul and the earliest creedal formulation available to us. If Barth and Bultmann are given credit for having called our attention anew to the eschatological significance of the scriptures, Kuenneth deserves at least as much for having restored the question of the historicity of the resurrection to the importance in the scholarly world that it apparently held in the early Church. The resurrection-quest dare not be taken lightly on either side of the discussion.

In the Easter kerygma of 1 Corinthians 15 we have the historical tradition and not essentially an expression of faith (which it no doubt does include as one of its elements). But this historical tradition is also considered as gospel without equal. The resurrection of Jesus is the completion of his "dying for all" and God's plan for creation, to be grasped not only as a cipher of the meaningfulness of death, but as an event in itself. The introductory creedal formulation presents both Good Friday and Easter Sunday. As Paul, then, speaks primarily of the resurrection, he has in the back of his mind the cross. Likewise the resurrection is included in his discussion of the cross (1 Cor. 1:22f.). An isolation of either historical event from the other would fail to grasp the Pauline intention. "1 Corinthians 15 is seen in its proper light as a defense of the resurrection of the dead in its most simple sense. Teaching that that which fell at death was that which would be raised and transformed to new life, Paul remained within the basic tradition of the Biblical and Jewish milieu concerning the resurrection of the dead. The conclusion must be that the analyses and selective emphases which came in later theological discussions did not have their roots in this passage of Biblical revelation."<sup>38</sup> But all of this obtains only in light of the historical resurrection of Jesus Christ, which took place in time and space. Thus, Christian faith lives from the resurrection of Christ toward one's own resurrection in the future coming of Christ. For this reason one cannot speak of the resurrection of the dead without His resurrection, as one cannot meaningfully speak of His cross without knowing that it was for us, as one cannot speak of a Christ in Pauline theology without referring to the historical Jesus. "The road to a future with God lies through a past with Jesus Christ."<sup>39</sup>

The creed (1 Cor. 15:3-5) shows that already quite early a unified body of true doctrine was formulated presenting a brief and concise summary of the gospel. Paul had here a historical interest running parallel with the kerygmatic. Here lies the foundation and content of faith and life for the Christian. The resurrection kerygma does not isolate the cross, but shows that the cross without the resur-



rection is meaningless. An isolation of the resurrection from the real significance of the cross for us fails to do justice to either. The confession of the Crucified must include the confession of the Resurrected Lord (1 Cor. 15:17).<sup>40</sup>

The task of theology is not to philosophize, but in making use of all tools available, including philosophy and philology, to theologize, that is, to present that which has been entrusted to us, for which the Old and New Testaments are our only sources. While of the three, faith, hope, and love, love holds priority for the Christian (1 Cor 13:13), Paul, apostle of Christ for men, emphasizes that those in Christ possess not only hope but certainty. The Christian places his faith in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, who was crucified and rose from the dead. As responsible Christians we must again and again return to the sources and allow them to speak, being more critical of ourselves than ever before, listening to the Word of God. The future will tell whether we have preached Christ or ourselves, whether we have dealt with ultimate questions or wasted our time in penultimate games. But if Christ has not been raised, then even this activity is ill-founded and we are indeed the most miserable of all men.

All in All = God (pre-history)

Cross/Resurrection *Tension*:

Creed (1 Cor. 15:3-5)

Jesus is Lord

(Jesus is the Christ: The Lord is Risen)

Cross:

We preach Christ  
crucified (1 Cor. 1:23)

Died—Buried  
(1 Cor. 15:3,4)

Resurrection:

The Power and Wisdom  
of God (1 Cor. 1:24)

Raised—Appeared  
(1 Cor. 15:4,5)

Conclusion:

If Christ has not been raised,  
our proclamation is empty (1 Cor. 15:14).

BUT, in fact, Christ has been raised  
from the dead, the first One of those  
who have died.

Consequence—hope

By HIM the resurrection of the dead has  
become a reality . . . all *shall be made*  
alive—Transformation/resurrection and  
*not* resuscitation (1 Cor. 15:20ff.).

Consequence—life

Because of Christ's resurrection we are a new  
generation living with the resurrection perspective;  
the victory has been won.

Parousia

All in All = God (post-history)

## FOOTNOTES

1. G. E. Wright, *Biblical Archaeology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), p. 180.
2. H. Thielicke, *Our Heavenly Father* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 60.
3. F. W. Filson, *Geschichte des Christentums in neutestamentlicher Zeit* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1967), p. 217.
4. Bo Reicke, "The Risen Lord and His Church," *Interpretation*, XIII (1959), pp. 158, 161.
5. A. von Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christentums* (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1900; Neuaufgabe, 1950), p. 92; cf. R. H. Mounce, "Continuity of the Primitive Tradition," *Interpretation*, XIII (1959), p. 423.
7. V. Taylor, *The Names of Jesus* (London: Macmillan, 1953), p. 47; cf. P. E. Davies, "Experience and Memory," *Interpretation*, XVI (1962), pp. 181-193.
8. F. W. Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), p. 356.
9. Richard R. Niebuhr, "Resurrection," *A Handbook of Christian Theology* (New York: Meridian Books, 1958), p. 326.
10. W. Kuenneth, "The Easter Message as the Essence of Theology," *Dialog*, I (1962), p. 16.
11. F. Chr. Baur, *Das Christentum und die christliche Kirche der ersten drei Jahrhunderte*, I (Tuebingen: Fues, 1853), pp. 283ff.
12. Quoted by K. Scholder, "F. Ch. Baur als Historiker," *Evangelische Theologie*, XXII (1961), p. 455.
13. R. Bultmann, *Kerygma und Mythos*, I, ed. by H. W. Bartsch (Hamburg: Herbert Reich Verlag, 1954<sup>3</sup>), pp. 46f.; see also discussion by Jeffrey B. Russell of the University of California, Riverside, in his work, *A History of Medieval Christianity: Prophecy and Order* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1968), p. 8: "Bultmann said, for example, that though the Resurrection could not be accepted as an historical fact, it remained, and justly so, the center of the individual's experience of Christianity. Lately such views, which were on their way to becoming standard, have been cogently questioned. James Robinson, *The New Quest of the Historical Jesus* (London, Naperville: Alec R. Allenson, 1959), points out that the earlier historians had asked too much. They had assumed, as good nineteenth-century positivists, that history could tell them 'how it really happened,' and when they found that it could not, they either gave up or retreated into solipsism. But historians today do not believe that history can say fully how any event 'really happened,' because they know that the matter of history is far too complex, and that the human mind is far too limited, ever to construct a truly objective history. What historians do today is use the evidence they have to create a coherent, consistent picture of how individuals *appeared* to themselves and to others. In this new approach, while the problem of Jesus remains extremely difficult, it is in the same category as the problem of Caesar, say, or of Franklin D. Roosevelt."
14. P. C. Hodgson, *The Formation of Historical Theology. A Study of F. Ch. Baur* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 117.
15. Quoted by Hodgson, p. 117.
16. Hodgson, p. 117.
17. F. Ch. Baur, p. 38ff.
18. H. Grass, *Osterglauben und Osterberichte* (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956), p. 233.

19. R. Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1941, 1952<sup>12</sup>), p. 539; D. F. Strauss, *Das Leben Jesu* (Tuebingen: Osiander, 1835/36), II, pp. 631f., 634f.
20. For detailed discussion see my work, *The Resurrection of the Dead* (Basel: Reinhardt, 1972), pp. 50f.
21. F. Chr. Baur, *Vorlesungen ueber neutestamentliche Theologie*, ed. by F. F. Baur, (Leipzig: Fues Verlag, 1864), p. 126.
22. A. Schweitzer, *Geschichte der paulinischen Forschung* (Tuebingen: Mohr, 1933<sup>2</sup>), pp. 15-16.
23. W. Kuenneth, "The Easter Message as the Essence of Theology," *Dialog*, I (Spring, 1962), p. 16.
24. D. F. Strauss as quoted by E. Barnikol, "Das dogmengeschichtliche Erbe Hegels," *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, LXXXV (1960), col. 849.
25. D. F. Strauss, *Gesammelte Schriften*, V (Bonn: Emil Strauss Verlag, 1876-78), p. 398; D. F. Strauss, *Reimarus und seine Schutzschrift fuer die vernuenftigen Verehrer Gottes* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1862).
26. J. D. Smart, *The Interpretation of Scripture* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), p. 244.
27. D. F. Strauss as quoted by F. Bente, "Sind Wunder des Urchristentums geschichtswissenschaftlich genuegend bezeugt?" *Lehre und Wehre*, LXII (1916), p. 338; cf. K. Barth, *Protestant Thought—From Rousseau to Ritschl* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), p. 364.
28. J. B. Phillips, *Your God is too small* (New York: Macmillan, 1961), pp. 112-113.
29. K. Barth, *Das Wort Gottes und die Theologie. Gesammelte Vorträge*, I (Muenchen: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1924), p. 84-85.
30. K. Barth, *Die Auferstehung der Toten* (Muenchen: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1924; Zuerich: EVZ Verlag, 1953<sup>1</sup>), p. 126.
31. K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV/1 (New York, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956), par. 59, p. 335.
32. P. S. Minear, "R. Bultmann's Interpretation of New Testament Eschatology," *The Theology of R. Bultmann*, ed. by Ch. W. Kegley (London: SCM, 1966), p. 66.
33. M. C. Tenney, *The Reality of the Resurrection* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 194.
34. B. H. Throckmorton, *The New Testament and Mythology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959), p. 57.
35. Tenney, p. 194.
36. E. Schlink, *Kerygma and History*, ed. by C. E. Braaten and R. A. Harrisville (New York: Abingdon, 1962), p. 180.
37. W. Kuenneth, *Ostergedanken. Die Auferstehungsbotschaft und der Mensch von heute* (Lahr: Ernst Kaufmann Verlag, 1963), p. 27.
38. L. Boliek, *The Resurrection of the Flesh* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 118-119.
39. J. Pelikan, "And the greatest of these is hope," *Cresset*, XXIX (1966), p. 39.
40. M. Kwiran, p. 365.