

Auferstehungshoffnung und Pneumagedanke bei Paulus  
Kurt Diessner  
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The idea has gained currency of late among expositors of Paulinism that a development showing several distinct stages can be traced in the Apostle's eschatology and especially in his doctrine of the resurrection and the state after death. The propelling principle in this development is assumed to have been the Pneuma-conception. In the first stage of teaching, represented by 1 Thess., Paul did not yet possess his later peculiar Pneuma-conception or, if he possessed it, did not yet bring it to bear upon his idea of the resurrection. He here expects the raising of a body like unto the body that has died, not a body differently constituted or organized. During the second stage, reflected in 1 Cor., the Apostle gives the Pneuma its full influence upon the form assumed by his resurrection-belief. What is now expected is a body different from the present body, a body deriving its specific character from the Pneuma. Now, inasmuch as the Spirit is a present possession of believers, it is urged that from this point of view, according to which the resurrection is a pneumatic transaction, the result of the indwelling of the Spirit, there was no good reason for postponing the moment when the influence of the Spirit reaches the body and effects its transformation till the parousia. If nevertheless Paul in 1 Cor. makes this pneumatic resurrection coincide with the parousia, this is an inconsistency due to a failure on his part to give full effect to the changed point of view. But this inconsistency could not last. Between the writing of 1 Cor. and 2 Cor. Paul had learned to realize that from his present premises the endowment with the pneumatic body might be just as well put at death and thus an intervening period of nakedness between death and the parousia avoided. This third stage of development, we are told, appears definitely accomplished in 2 Cor. 5 where the heavenly body is represented as coming immediately after the laying aside of the earthly body or even in the same moment, what is mortal being swallowed up of life, and where consequently the entrance into full fellowship with the Lord is not postponed, as in 1 Thess., till the parousia, but placed directly after the exit from this life. Some go farther than this, and find in certain passages the extreme view that the resurrection-body is under the influence of the indwelling Spirit already in process of formation underneath the physical body during the present life, so that what takes place hereafter would be strictly speaking not the receiving but only the revelation of the new body which had been up to that point hidden under its earthly envelope.

This view just sketched has with minor variations been advocated by such writers as Pfleiderer, Schmiedel, Teichmann, Sokolowski, Charles and others. Deissner's treatise is in its main intent a criticism, and we believe a successful criticism, of its central principle, viz., that the introduction of the Pneuma-conception has essentially modified the Apostle's view of the resurrection. The author shows how little basis there is for such an assumption. A careful exegesis reveals that on the one hand there is no reason to believe that the eschatological statements of 1 Thess. have any other background than the characteristically Pauline doctrine of the Spirit, although, owing to the peculiar form which the perplexity of the Thessalonians in regard to the destiny of their dead had assumed, there was no special occasion for Paul to make this background stand out very strongly here. It also shows that on the other hand in 2 Cor. 5 there is no real abandonment of the eschatological positions of 1 Thess., nay that on the contrary the phrases and statements in which the endowment with the new body at death is here found by the advocates of the development-view in reality refer to the being-clothed-upon at the moment of the parousia, the attainment of which Paul, in his strong desire to avoid

“nakedness”, here expresses himself as preferring to a previous death. In other words the Pneuma-conception is an integral element in the structure of Paul’s doctrine of the resurrection from the outset and not introduced subsequently as a disrupting factor. All this is shown by a very painstaking and lucid exegesis of the main passages 1 Thess. 4, 1 Cor. 15, and 2 Cor. 5. If this exegetical enquiry brings out virtually nothing that is new or original, it at least has the great merit of being conducted with special reference to the point at issue, and so enables the reader to weigh the evidence much more easily than would be possible through the study of the commentaries, where the question appears mixed up with a number of other problems. One distinctly gains the impression in following the author’s reasoning, that the whole hypothesis of an eschatological development in the mind of Paul is chiefly due to the present vogue of finding evolution and complications and inconsistencies wherever possible. If the writers advocating this scheme were half as eager to discover and vindicate the unity and harmony of the Apostle’s teaching on this fundamental subject from beginning to end, they could have made a far stronger case than they are now able to make for the opposite view. Deissner demonstrates how impregnable the old position, notwithstanding the exegetical difficulties of such passages as 1 Cor. 15 and 2 Cor. 5, actually is.

In regard to certain issues not directly involved in the main point under discussion, we are not sure that we are able to follow the author. Thus e.g., where he intimates a couple of times that the order of affairs which the Apostle expects to begin at the parousia is conceived by Paul as a kingdom on earth, although nothing distinctively chiliastic is predicated of it, so that we remain in doubt in regard to its precise nature, as also in 1 Cor. 15 we remain in doubt as to the precise chronological relation between the parousia and the delivery of the kingdom by Christ unto the Father. Too much, it seems to us, is staked in this matter on the one word *καταβησεται* of 1 Thess. 4:16. Nor can we agree with the author when, after rejecting the development assumed by the other writers in the main substance of the doctrine, he traces a development of his own in regard to a minor point between the standpoint of 1 Thess. and 1 Cor. on the one hand and 2 Cor. and Philippians on the other hand. This development is held to consist in this that during the earlier period Paul conceived of the intermediate state as a state of *κοιμασθαι* “sleeping”, whilst during the later period he connected the entrance upon full conscious fellowship with Christ immediately with death, so that in 2 Cor. 5 where at first the alternative: previous death or survival till the parousia evoked from Paul strong preference for the latter and strong aversion to the former, a few verses later under the realization of this hope of immediate enjoyment of fellowship with Christ after death, the alternative just described lost for him its acute painful character, and he professes himself contented even in prospect of the less desirable of its two possibilities. We do not believe that the use of the word *κοιμασθαι* in 1 Thess. and 1 Cor. is able to bear the weight of inference here put upon it. It must have been even in the time of Paul a purely metaphorical designation of the act of dying and the state of death, and the author has not in our opinion succeeded in proving that Paul necessarily associated with it the idea of unconsciousness. On the contrary, the same argument which he urges in favor of the view that the resurrection-idea stood already at the time of writing of 1 Thess. under the influence of the Pneuma-conception, seems to us to weigh equally much in favor of the view that at that time already Paul must have conceived of the state of death as a state of fellowship with Christ. If the resurrection is here virtually described as taking place *εν Χριστω*, the same is affirmed of the *κοιμασθαι*. To be sure the author believes he can escape the force of this argument by observing that in 1 Cor. 15:18 in *οι κοιμηθεντες εν Χριστω* the aorist tense is used, so that only the “dying” not the “being dead” is represented as taking place in Christ. But that is certainly a hair-splitting distinction and Deissner

besides overlooks that in 1 Thess. 4:16 the phrase νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ does not allow of such a restriction to the moment of death. If then the fellowship with Christ covers the whole intermediate state, it becomes difficult to conceive of this as a state of unconsciousness and to differentiate it any longer from the state of fellowship looked forward as beginning with death in 2 Cor. 5 and Phil. 1.

It was perhaps not strictly germane to the author's purpose to give the Pauline conception of the Pneuma its larger eschatological setting. His theme brings it about that he could content himself with considering merely the functional operation of the Spirit in creating the prerequisite state of the resurrection. Still by losing sight of the larger aspect of the matter and not considering the Spirit as the element of the eschatological heavenly life in general and bringing into connection with this the special work of the Spirit concerning the raising of the body, the true perspective of the whole question is somewhat put out of focus and valuable light on it is shut off. The impression even is created, as if the resurrection of the body at the last day were not a specific act of the Pneuma, although this is not explicitly said in so many words. That the author does not quite steer clear of giving this impression is due to his legitimate desire to controvert the modern notion as if the resurrection-body could be in any sense the product of an immanent development of the Pneuma dwelling in the believer. Over against this it is quite right to emphasize that the endowment with the new body is according to Paul an objective act, by which something is imparted *ab extra*, not something evolved from within. But in emphasizing this Deissner does not state clearly enough that to Paul this objective act is none the less an act which God supernaturally performs through His Spirit, so that there is a true connection and continuity between the immanent Spirit of the present Christian life and the objectively-operating Spirit of the resurrection-act.

At the conclusion of his treatise the author gives a survey of the views of the Stoic and the Epicurean philosophies on the subject of immortality and shows plainly that the nature of these views was not such as to make the assumption of any appreciable influence exerted by them on Paul at all plausible. The Stoics believed only in a temporary survival of the soul till the next world-conflagration, and that not consistently, since some believed in an earlier resurrection of the individual soul into the general pneuma. And the representatives of the Stoa who stood nearest to Paul in point of time, like Seneca, were at heart skeptical on the subject. In regard to Sap. Sol. and 4 Macc., where a greater formal agreement with Paul as to the persistence of conscious life after death exists, it is urged that even here on the point of the Pneuma-conception there are wide-reaching differences, the Spirit being not consistently conceived as "power" after the manner of Paul. In regard to the valuation of the body as an integral part of man there existed even a fundamental antithesis, since in these Hellenizing writings the body is felt to be a burden and a detraction to the state of future blessedness, whereas Paul considers the body absolutely essential to the consummate eschatological life.