

inthians, woeful to the apostle himself, woeful to Christians of every age would the consequences be, if the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead could be invalidated. By having regard to the consequences to which the apostle so clearly adverts, the truth will readily flash across our minds that if the resurrection from the dead were denied or could be overthrown, no other conclusion could be drawn than that which these words present to us, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." For why should he, the nobly energetic apostle, in common with others lead a life of ceaseless anxiety, endure privations, sufferings, persecutions? Why should he, in those homes of classic elegance and refinement, endeavour to do violence to opinions and prejudices that had on their side the accumulated voices of centuries? Why, like other men, should not the apostles enjoy the ease and luxury of life's little day, careless of the future, regardless of the mysterious occurrences that lie beyond the confines of the grave? It is impossible to resist the force of an argument so masterly, so convincing, so lucid. Did the matter rest here, were the apostle's hope in Christ confined to the horizon of the present, how could the conclusion be withstood, "that of all men they were most miserable?" The words fall upon our ears with a brightened beauty and a cheering melody, as the apostle, after presenting the case in all its bearings, with pardonable triumph and joy exclaims, "but now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept."

In the olden time, the Jews with gladness of feeling presented the first sheaf, the harbinger of the coming harvest, the sure indication that the waving corn would soon be ripe. The analogy here presented is true, is beautiful. As the Jewish husbandman was directed to make choice of a sheaf as an indication of the coming harvest, so may the glorious truth be affirmed in reference to Christ, that, inasmuch as He is