

Christ's physical body, while retaining all its essential elements, underwent important changes, partaking of such sublimated and etherealized qualities as might account for the phenomena to which we have referred. And yet that Christ's resurrection body remained material is evident from the fact that the disciples touched Him; that the women embraced His feet; that Thomas was solicited to put his finger in the print of the nails and thrust his hand into the spear-wound in His side; and that Jesus, on another occasion, ate of the broiled fish and the honeycomb the disciples gave Him.

3. If there was no physical resurrection we can not account for the empty sepulcher. The material body of Christ was laid in the tomb. If it did not rise it is unaccountable that no one ever saw it in the tomb, or knew where it had been laid. The supposition that it was surreptitiously removed is directly contrary to the Scripture narrative, and, as we have already suggested, a gross deception on the part of Christ, who, as He stood in the presence of His disciples, said, "It is I myself." So Jesus tarried with His disciples forty days after His resurrection, appearing repeatedly in material form.

To this theory, which at intervals has been revived and lived for a little only, that the resurrection of Christ is not physical, as the Church has always intimately believed, we have many and serious objections.

1. It is unscriptural. This we have endeavored to show. Not a single passage in the Word of God sustains it. The facts are against it. To endeavor to support any human hypotheses by exploiting supposed contradictions in the Gospel and denying the proper inspiration of the Scriptures, so weakening confidence in their authority, and encouraging complete and absolute unbelief, is an offense which no line of human thought can measure.

2. We object to it because it impairs the doctrine of the atonement. If the resurrection body of Christ was not a true body, then it is only a step to the denial of a true body from the beginning. This is the error of the Docetæ, of the second century, who held that Christ wore the appearance or shadow of a body, by which He became visible, and His sufferings which at a later period they admitted, were not the results of natural law, but of choice; so denying both the incarnation and the atoning sacrifice of our Lord.

3. We object to this unscriptural theory because it takes from us the comfort the resurrection is fitted to give. The words of Jesus which in sore bereavement have so often relieved our sorrows, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," lose their significance and power; we love the earthly tabernacles with which are associated the spiritual experiences of life; which aided our communication with Christ, and were the instruments of righteousness, in happy Christian service, and as we approach the grave there is an earnest longing for a resurrection which shall restore what shall be for a season lost.

I close with a brief quotation from the venerated Dr. Philip Schaff: "Before we can reason the resurrection out of history we must reason St. Paul and Christianity itself out of existence. We must admit the miracle or frankly confess that we stand before an inexplicable mystery."