

What about modern attitudes to this message of the resurrection of Jesus? There are those to-day who faithfully proclaim this message of a crucified, risen, ascended, and coming Lord. The evangelical believes in the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The faith of a fundamentalist on this matter may be expressed in these words, "It is an essential doctrine of the Word of God and our Standards that on the third day He rose again from the dead with the same body with which He suffered, with which also He ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of His Father making intercession." This statement sets forth very sharply the belief in the physical resurrection and ascension of our Lord. It is the teaching of the Bible and the historic confessions of the Christian Church.

On the other hand there are those who raise a protest against this essential doctrine, thinking that other views should be tolerated even within the Church of Jesus Christ. Dr. William Pierson Merrill in his book "Liberal Christianity" actually recommends and defends the liberal attitude. This prominent American Presbyterian clergyman says, "The liberal Christian is more or less indifferent to the question whether it was in the body or in the spirit that Jesus rose. The crucial fact, that which counts, is the indestructible persuasion that He lives, and is with us now, our Lord, our Master, through whom God draws near to us and we to Him." (page 57) On this particular point Dr. Merrill shows the influence of the late Dr. Adolf Harnack, of Germany, who has written as follows, "Faith has by no means to do with the knowledge of the form in which Jesus lives, but only with the conviction that He is the living Lord." Here is a classic presentation of Harnack's claim that the "Easter faith" is independent of the "Easter message." However, according to the New Testament