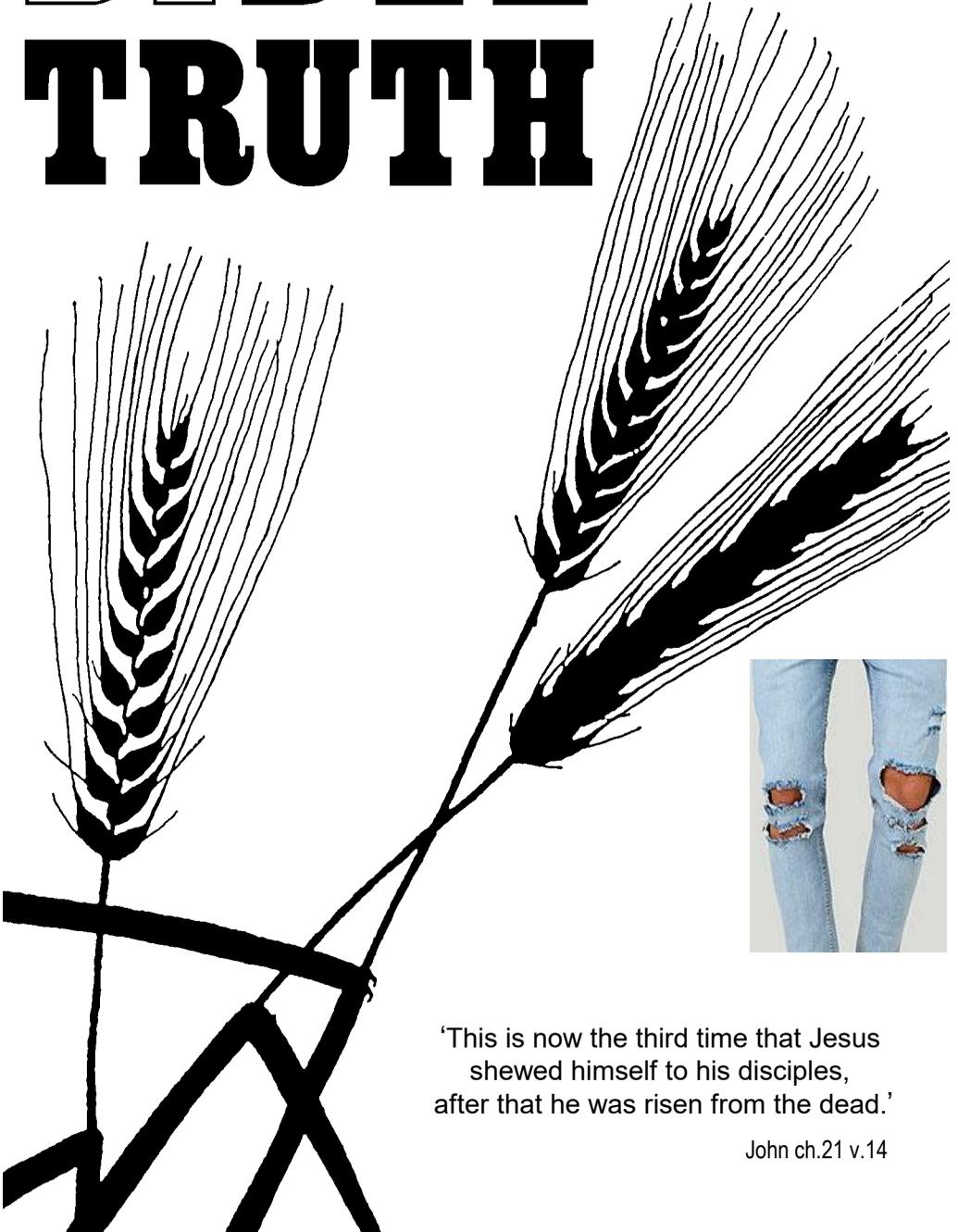


BIBLE TRUTH

No. 294
April / June 2019



'This is now the third time that Jesus
shewed himself to his disciples,
after that he was risen from the dead.'

John ch.21 v.14

The Lord is Risen

by E.J. Springett

Nowhere is there to be found such a majestic triumphant affirmation of the truth of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ than in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians. These truths are the very foundation of the Christian faith, for as has been said,

'The Resurrection created the church, the Risen Christ made Christianity: and even now the Christian faith stands or falls with Him ... if it be true that no living Christ ever issued from the tomb of Joseph, then that tomb becomes the grave, not of a man, but of a religion, with all the hopes built on it, and all the splendid enthusiasm it has inspired'.

Patrick Fairbairn (1805-1874 Scottish minister and theologian)

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the supreme convincing fact that His words were true and that He was what He had claimed to be. It is also the unassailable foundation of the truth that He shall come again to reign as King of kings, and Lord of lords. As Marcus Dodds (Scottish Theologian 1834-1909) declares,

'In order that His claim to be the Messiah might be understood, it was necessary that He should die; but in order that it might be believed it was needful that He should rise'.

And further, the Resurrection of Christ is the sample and pledge of ours. When the farmer pulls the first ripe ears of wheat and carries them home, it is not for their own sake that he values them, but because they are a specimen and a sample of the whole crop; and when God raised Christ from the dead, the glory of that event consisted in its being the pledge and specimen of the triumph of mankind over death. '... if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him' (1 Thessalonians ch.4 v.14). And with the morn those angel faces smile, which we have loved long since and lost awhile.

In days when many hearts are saddened through bereavement, the question is often asked, 'Shall we see our loved ones again? Shall we be able to recognise them?' That question was asked in Saint Paul's day. He says, 'But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?' (1 Corinthians ch.15 v.35). And the Apostle answers both enquiries by referring to analogies in the natural world. The seed sown becomes the plant, the

acorn develops into the mighty oak, the grub becomes the butterfly. So we are taught that death does not end all. Death is not the end of life but the beginning.

When Jesus was here, He declared that the purpose of His coming was to endow men with the fulness of life. 'I am come' he said, 'that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly'. John ch.10 v.10). By His Resurrection and the assurance of ours, He made absolutely irrevocable the gift of Abundant Life forever. So the Resurrection Body is a glorified body, subject to no decay, possessing qualities not owned by this earthly frame, but capable of fitting into an environment prepared by Almighty God. When Jesus came back from the grave, He declared He was not a spirit.

On that first Resurrection Day He stood in the midst of His disciples.

'But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet.'

Luke ch.24 vv 38-40

And yet, they still doubted, 'unable to believe for very joy'. Then He ate before them, and just as the two disciples on the road to Emmaus recognised Him in the breaking of the bread, so in that simple and familiar act, at long last they were able to understand. As it says, 'then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord' (see John ch.20 v.20). So we can be assured of reunion, of recognition, and we can be certain of preparation and ability for service in the life ahead. These bodies of ours, subject to the weaknesses of earthly life, will be transformed by the power of an endless life. Thus we repeat the triumphant affirmation,

'I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore ...'.

Revelation ch.1 v.18

We can rest serene upon the promise of the Risen Christ.

'... because I live, ye shall live also.'

John ch.14 v.19

Those having gone from the world before the Passion of our Lord had acclaimed Him as King, recognised His victory over death, for at the time of His investiture with royal power, they had proclaimed,

'... Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth'.

Revelation ch.5 vv 9-10

'We shall reign on the earth.' Yes! They who died before Christ came in the flesh, they who were with Him when He was here, and we who are yet to be with Him. Well might Peter have exhorted the people of His day with,

'Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began'.

Acts ch.3 vv 19-21

'The times of restitution of all things' are very near: and they 'which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him' (1Thessalonians ch.4 v.14) so the Kingdom of God shall indeed function, 'and we shall be changed'(1 Corinthians ch.15 v.52).

'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'

I Corinthians ch.15 v.58
