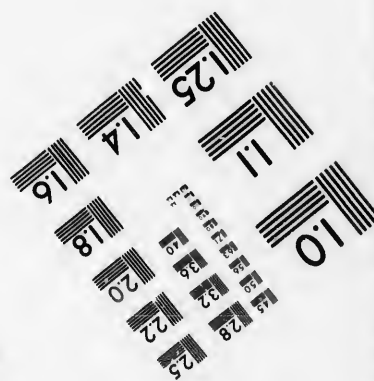
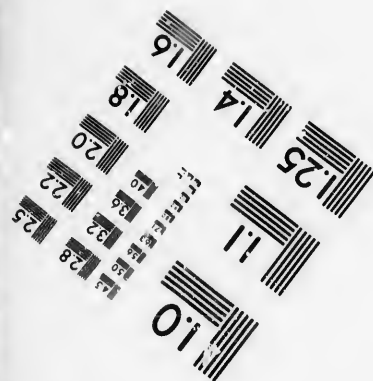
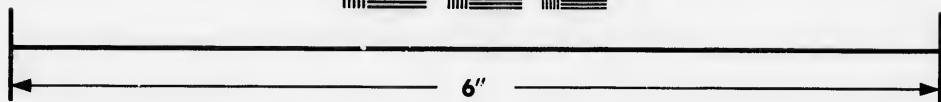
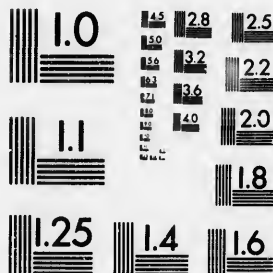


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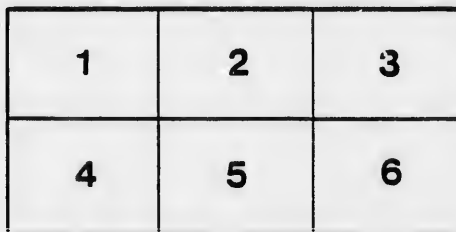
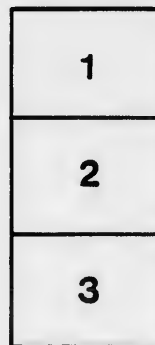
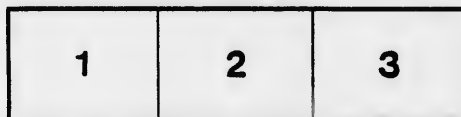
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ON THE MORNING OF

EASTER SUNDAY, 1861.

By REV. R. H. BULLOCK, A. M.

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S E R M O N .

“I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVETH.”—Job xix. 25.

“*I believe in the resurrection of the body.*” Who can refuse to believe in this article of the Christian Faith, after the recorded, attested Miracles of Easter. Heathens in their blindness may regard the earthly house of this tabernacle as a perishable tenement, which, once dissolved, was dissolved eternally. But they know not the triumphs of Jesus Christ,—they have not learned the history of Him that liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore,—in their dark calendar there is no glorious Easter-tide,—in their comfortless theology there is no resurrection of their dead,—to them, as yet, has not been revealed one whom they may call Saviour—a Saviour who having died, continued not in death, and of whom we, with Job can joyously exclaim, “I know that my Redeemer liveth.” They know not of a mighty Being, who investing Himself in our mortal flesh, lived our life, suffered our pains, died our death, and then to justify our souls, and prove the imperishable destiny of our whole being, rose again.

But the Christian who would wish to discredit the resurrection of the dead, disgraces his title to immortality. He who hopes that his soul may sleep eternally, and his body be buried in the unending dishonor of corruption, allies himself in spirit to the brutes that perish. For man’s immortality is a priceless treasure,—man’s hope of eternal life an invaluable heritage.

Who that possesses within him a spark of hope, would wish to be for ever blotted out of existence, when this short troubled life is over. There is something in our composition that shrinks from the hateful idea of annihilation: we want to live again: we instinctively look beyond the grave, and, while we hope, we feel that the life we now live in the flesh is but the infancy of existence, and we would not barter our expectations in the future for anything this life only has to offer. The despairing, the unforgiven, the reckless, might in the sure prospect of eternal woe, desire to be eternally forgotten of God, not because they do not want to live again, but because they shrink affrighted from the penalties of the future life. Proclaim sin as without punishment,—offer eternal happiness to sinners and saints alike, and out of the myriads of the living and the dead, you will not find a solitary being preferring annihilation. Therefore, because the ungodly will gain nothing, and the unholy fear everything from the resurrection, it is no argument against the truth that God has ordained for every human being an unending future; for it is not immortality, but the curse of a tormented immortality that sinners fear.

There would be no advocates for sepulchres shut eternally if their occupants were sure, or even hopeful, of perfect consummation of bliss both in body and soul. None would desire the silence and dishonor of a grave, if it were in his choice to exchange them for the raptures and honors of Heaven: therefore we pass by as not worth consideration any plea against immortality which arises out of the fears of those who by their sins have shut the doors of Heaven against themselves, and for their own sakes would consign all others to an endless sleep in death. And before we seek instruction from Revelation, we would ask Nature what is her verdict between those who hope for immortality, and those who deny its truth, and she will send you to the murmuring brooks,

just released from the icy grave of winter; she will bid you mark the enlivening sap coursing through the veins of the leafless trees, or the bursting buds that shew life renewed, in branches which, during winter, shewed only signs of death. And as the reviving influences of spring pass like an angel of life over a dead creation, the noisy arguments of the infidel ought to be hushed into silence, and he should blush in shame to think that he denied to Man what Nature does not deny to her dominion—a resurrection from the dead.

But the Christian is not left to form his decision on this mystery from the voice of Nature, clear though it be: the voice of God declares, in terms still more unmistakable, that life does not end in time,—that the soul never dies,—that the body must rise again, and that soul and body must live eternally. What an overwhelming mystery is this! what an argument for pure and holy lives, in time! Life only begins on earth, and yet the brief span of man's days in time, determines how life eternal is to be passed. We admit at once that if God had never done anything for us since our first parents won, by disobedience, the miserable heritage of God's displeasure, the burden of this certain immortality would be too heavy for us to bear; but in view of what He has done,—in view of the lessons of the week past,—in full sight of the Cross, and Him who died thereon,—in the knowledge of what that death won for us—the hope of glory,—in view of an open sepulchre from which as on this day our Saviour emancipated Himself and us;—knowing that we have been redeemed from the penalties of a violated law, and that the Kingdom of Heaven is open to all believers, we can accept our destined immortality with a cheerful, glad heart; and knowing that our Redeemer liveth, we need not fear life with Him,—life in His presence,—life eternal gladdened by His approbation. And this is the day on which the Saviour, having by His death and passion earned for us forgiveness of

sins,—by His resurrection robbed the grave of its power to retain within its prisons the bodies of any of mankind. His work of redemption was incomplete until He had subdued the power of death. The travail of His soul was not seen by Him with perfect satisfaction, until with life wrested back from the spoiler, He once more trod our earth, and with his own voice proclaimed our souls free from sin—our bodies emancipated from corruption.

We therefore think that Christian in a most unenviable temper, who awaking this morning from his sleep, the type of death, and arising with the consciousness that the light on which his eyes were opened was the light of Easter, did not in spirit, if not in words, greet it with the declaration, "This is the day the Lord hath made, I will rejoice and be glad in it,"—did not with a feeling akin to exultation enter on the day, made glad with the certainty embodied in the text, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." For the Christian who has faithfully with prayer, with the sorrow of sympathy, with the sadness of penitence continued with the Saviour in his trial, commemorated and represented during Lent, and more especially in Holy Week, cannot but feel a sense of relief when the worst is past, and the agony and passion of his unoffending, loving Saviour is ended.

So touching has been the recital of the sufferings of Jesus, so evidently has He been set forth as bearing our sorrows, overwhelmed with the chastisement of our sins, and finally tortured to death, that He might stand between us and our offended God, that even the thoughtless must have been arrested, and their minds sobered in viewing such an unparalleled scene of woe—for only the utterly heartless could hear unmoved, and view with indifference, sorrows so unexampled, so undeserved. And then when at last our hearts are filled with shame for our sins, and with love and sympathy for that Being who relieved us from them,—when our emotions have

been excited with scene after scene in that tragedy which resulted in our salvation and Christ's death, our sadness is suddenly dispelled by the Easter anthem, and our chastened spirits are revived by the joyous tidings that our Redeemer liveth: "*Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.*" Animated with this good news, we may face death, which before was appalling; we may enter the grave, which before was dark as midnight, with the brave challenge, "*Oh, death, where is thy sting? Oh, grave, where is thy victory?*"

This transition from the sorrows of Passion Week to the glories of Easter, is like issuing from the darkened chamber of mourning into the gladdening light of day; like exchanging the sad wailing note of a dirge for the joyous peal of a triumph. And to those who have sorrowed with Christ, while He suffered, it is permitted this day to joy with Him in His victory. To those who have sown in tears when Christ was in suffering, is it now permitted to reap with joy. To those who have endured the sorrow which continueth for a night, has come the joy which was ushered in this morning. They may appropriate, as if uttered to themselves, the words Christ uttered to His disciples, to fortify their drooping spirits, at the prospect of His death: "Ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

The ejaculation of the afflicted Job forms a most appropriate theme of meditation for Easter day. With fuller meaning, with more power for consolation, it may be used by the Christian, to whom is revealed the fact of the resurrection, than by the Patriarch to whom darkly it was intimated, that in a life beyond the grave there are compensations for the sorrows of time.

The occasion on which Job uttered these words indicates how great a solace the knowledge which they assert was to

him. He was in sorrow,—he was in bereavement,—he was in sickness,—he was in temptation,—he was, as it seemed to him, looking death close in the face: and yet in the midst of these sorrows which he had in his heart, he refreshed his soul with the knowledge that his Redeemer lived: and what did he mean by this? what but that he resolved to look away from the world in which he found no rest, to that other world where he would experience no unrest;—what but that he buoyed up his spirits under the depressing accidents of time, by the certainty of changed prospects, if not here, yet surely hereafter;—what but that, in the spirit of an Apostle, he reckoned that the sufferings of the present time were not worthy to be compared with the glory that should be revealed. It is as if he had said, I know whom I have trusted,—I know that God will not suffer me to be tempted above that I am able to bear,—I know that on my wrestlings with temptation, on my writhings under torment, on my affliction in bereavement, the ever-watchful eye of God is resting,—that my tears and sighs are known to Him,—that when this miserable existence is closed, another and blessed life will be mine,—that when the shadows of the restless night are gone, I shall be ushered into a life of cloudless day: and all this because my Redeemer liveth. I will be patient, therefore, and resigned,—I will drink submissively the cup of affliction which God now fills for me: for I know that in the end I shall be refreshed from the cup of salvation. I will forget the sorrows of the present, in the anticipation of rest in the future,—I will bear with cheerfulness the inquietude and anguish of the moment, because I feel assured that in eternity I shall enjoy the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: and, brethren, if Job, centuries before the Cross was reared, and the sepulchre burst, could thus reason, and with such reasoning comfort his soul with words which foreshadowed the resurrection of the Redeemer and consoler of

the world,—how shall not rather we, before whose eyes the Saviour died and revived,—in whose hands are the plain declarations of the Gospel, that life eternal for body and soul has been secured by the sacrifice of the dying Saviour and the intercessions of the living Mediator, comfort ourselves with such words, and meet trials manfully, bear suffering patiently, and confront even death hopefully—comforting and strengthening our souls with the trust, “*I know that my Redeemer liveth.*”

On such a Festival as this, on which the Bible in its proper Lessons, its Psalms, and Gospel,—the Church in her prayers and anthems,—are joyfully telling how He who died for our sins rose again for our justification, ye, brethren, will not surely ask, how are we to certify to ourselves that Christ is risen from the dead,—how are we to inform ourselves with certainty that our Redeemer liveth? nor will we enlarge on the many infallible proofs by which Christ shewed Himself alive after His Passion. Your Bible is full of them. You know it from type and prophecy,—you know it from the predictions of your Saviour before He died,—you are assured of it by angels in the garden of Arimathea. The Gospels in their concluding chapters abound with proofs.—the Epistles are full of assertions and arguments to confirm your knowledge: and as if this were not enough to establish the most doubtful in the truth of the resurrection, as if to leave the most sceptical without excuse, the Saviour Himself, after that He had ascended to the Father, made one grand final announcement of this truth, and from Heaven declared in language so majestic that we are compelled to acknowledge it as the voice of God,—the utterance of Him who spake as never man spake,—the true voice of Him who sojourned and died on earth. “I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.” Who does not feel his heart bound, as he utters to himself these glorious words, and confess that the Being who

pronounced them had a right to assume these magnificent titles, "*I am the resurrection and the life.*" Who does not see that closely associated with the death and revival of Jesus Christ, is that utterance of Divine consolation to us poor mourners upon earth, "*Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.*"

And do you think it out of place to speak of suffering, and mourning, and death, on a day like this, when the Church is telling of victory, and hope, and life? Not so. What better time to speak of conflict than while we are standing side by side with the all-conquering Captain of our salvation?—what more appropriate time to tell you that the earthly house of your tabernacle shall be dissolved, than while we are contemplating the triumph of Him who this day proved, that we shall be clothed upon with immortality,—that we shall have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens? What more comfortable occasion to meditate on the time when we shall lie down in the grave, than when we are gazing into the rent and rifled sepulchre of our Saviour and Representative, Jesus Christ? What fitter time to muse on friends departed, on our sleeping dear ones, than on the day when assuring ourselves by actual sight that our Redeemer liveth, we can comfort one another with the blessed, tranquilizing assurance, if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, *even so them also that sleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him.* Suffering in any phase, at any time,—death in any shape, are saddening themes: but they are a part of our destiny—we cannot evade them; and there is no time when we can speak so cheerfully of them as when we can place side by side with our sorrows the hope of glory,—side by side with our dissolution, Christ's resurrection.

Those ingredients in human existence which are by many considered as poison to a happy life, are never more appropriately reflected on by Christians, than when they are trea-

sureing in their hearts the antidote; and for the sorrows of the Christian, as well as for the afflictions of the Patriarch, there is a solace in the assurance and utterance of that truth, never so clearly proved as on this the third day from the Crucifixion, "*I know that my Redeemer liveth*"—"Christ is risen from the dead."

Our Redeemer liveth; yea, ever liveth to make intercession; and because He liveth we shall live also, therefore let the light of Easter lighten our darkness throughout the year,—lighten our hearts when clouded with suffering,—lighten our griefs when with brimming eyes and overflowing hearts we are taking our last look on the countenances of our dead,—lighten our eyes when glazing in death.

Oh, my brethren, let us hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, as on this day given to us,—let us press on that we may be partakers of the resurrection of Christ, and of the life which Christ has purchased by His precious blood,—let us shun as deadliest curse the resurrection of the lost—the rising again to be forever buried in living death. Let the knowledge that our Redeemer is now living and watching our lives, constrain us to be pure,—constrain us to live and act for the day when we shall arise from the dead, and standing before the great white Throne, be judged by Him who for us and our salvation came down from Heaven, lived, and died, and revived. Oh, when from numberless graves the dead are arising,—when from the sods of the valley millions of human forms are being marshalled for the Judgment, how divine and comfortable a thing will it be for all whom Christ will own, to allay the terrors which a consuming universe, and the apprehension which a memory burdened with innumerable transgressions might excite, with the words of hope, and confidence, and certainty, "*I know that my Redeemer liveth.*"

He, my Friend, will judge me,—He, my Saviour, will be

my advocate,—He, my Elder Brother, will intercede for me. Yes, when the majesty of the Great Easter of the Universe, by its awful splendor, and the innumerable hosts of the risen, should threaten to seal my lips, and make me speechless before my Judge—knowing that over that dread tribunal presides my Redeemer and Saviour,—in all the confidence of sins forgiven through His merits,—of acquittal purchased by His blood,—of eternal glory gained by His intercession,—may you, may I, be able to look up with an appeal, to which Christ will most lovingly respond, “*Thou shalt answer for me, O my God.*”

To me, brethren, it is the source of peculiar satisfaction and gratitude to God, that the last Lord’s day I can spend among you is a day associated with the high hopes and deep joys which Easter always brings. That nearly the latest act of my sojourn here will be to break the bread, and consecrate the wine, which, in their participation, links us each to other, and unites us all to God. Distance cannot break the bond which constitutes the fellowship of Christ. Time cannot dissolve the ties which knit together the elect in one communion in the mystical body of Christ our Lord. Yet, while I joy in this belief, and my soul is gladdened with confidence that when absent, you will not cease to remember one who in great weakness, and with many imperfections, once ministered at that Holy Table, and tried by the preaching of the Crucified to soothe you in trouble, to counsel you in perplexity, and to win you to Christ, I feel oppressed and very sad as the word of my farewell trembles on my lips,—oppressed more than ever with thoughts of the awful responsibility with which the preaching of God’s Word, and the ministration of Christ’s Sacrament, is invested. Wherein I have erred,—wherein I have failed, may my merciful Master forgive me, and lay not the sin to my charge, as in sorrow and deep humiliation I confess, “*I am thy unprofitable*

servant." But in the midst of the sorrows that I have in my heart, God's comforts refresh my soul,—the comfort of knowing that the effect of His preached Word is independent of the unworthy lips that utter it,—that the efficacy of the administered Sacraments is never impaired by the unworthiness of the hand that is dipped in the font, or that distributes the sacred symbols of the Saviour's Passion. For this knowledge I thank God,—in this confidence I take courage, and dare to think that the seed sown in my great weakness may be raised in God's great power,—that in some penitent souls the promises of pardon, which in the name and on the authority of the Saviour I have uttered, have fallen like dew upon the parched soil,—that the blessings of our merciful High Priest which I have pronounced, have been like cordial to some vexed and trembling hearts.

I have from hence, brethren, often told you of the terrors of the Lord. God forgive me, if ever I have by them saddened one soul whom God did not make sad. I have still more often preached to you the love and compassion, the gentleness and sympathy, of the Lamb of God. God pardon me if in so doing I have ever whispered peace to a soul, to which God did not speak peace. I speak to you once more, and my last message from God shall be the proffer of His love; and this I do, because I know that the sight of Jesus weeping, with tears pleading, with blood persuading, with death redeeming you, is more likely to turn impenitence into godly sorrow, indifference into active love, than any other power in Heaven and earth. Seek Him while He may be found. It is foreign to Him to repel your approach. By all that is lovely in His Divine nature,—by all that is attractive in His human sympathies, He would win you to his side, and say, "*thy sins are forgiven, go in peace.*" It is the assurance that I shall meet this great Friend of sinners wherever I go; and that He will be as near to me, and as kind to me, afar

off from this well-beloved sanctuary, as He is this day, that calms the emotion of sorrow and regret with which I leave my father's home, and my father's flock.

Finally, brethren, farewell. I ask your earnest prayers for strength that I may do my Master's bidding, and shew myself a workman that need not be ashamed. Yea, sometimes think of me as you utter in the congregation that prayer to Christ—"Endue Thy ministers with righteousness;" and I will oftentimes think of you, when on my knees I utter the response—"Make Thy chosen people joyful."

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.—
AMEN.

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