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Louis T. Talbot

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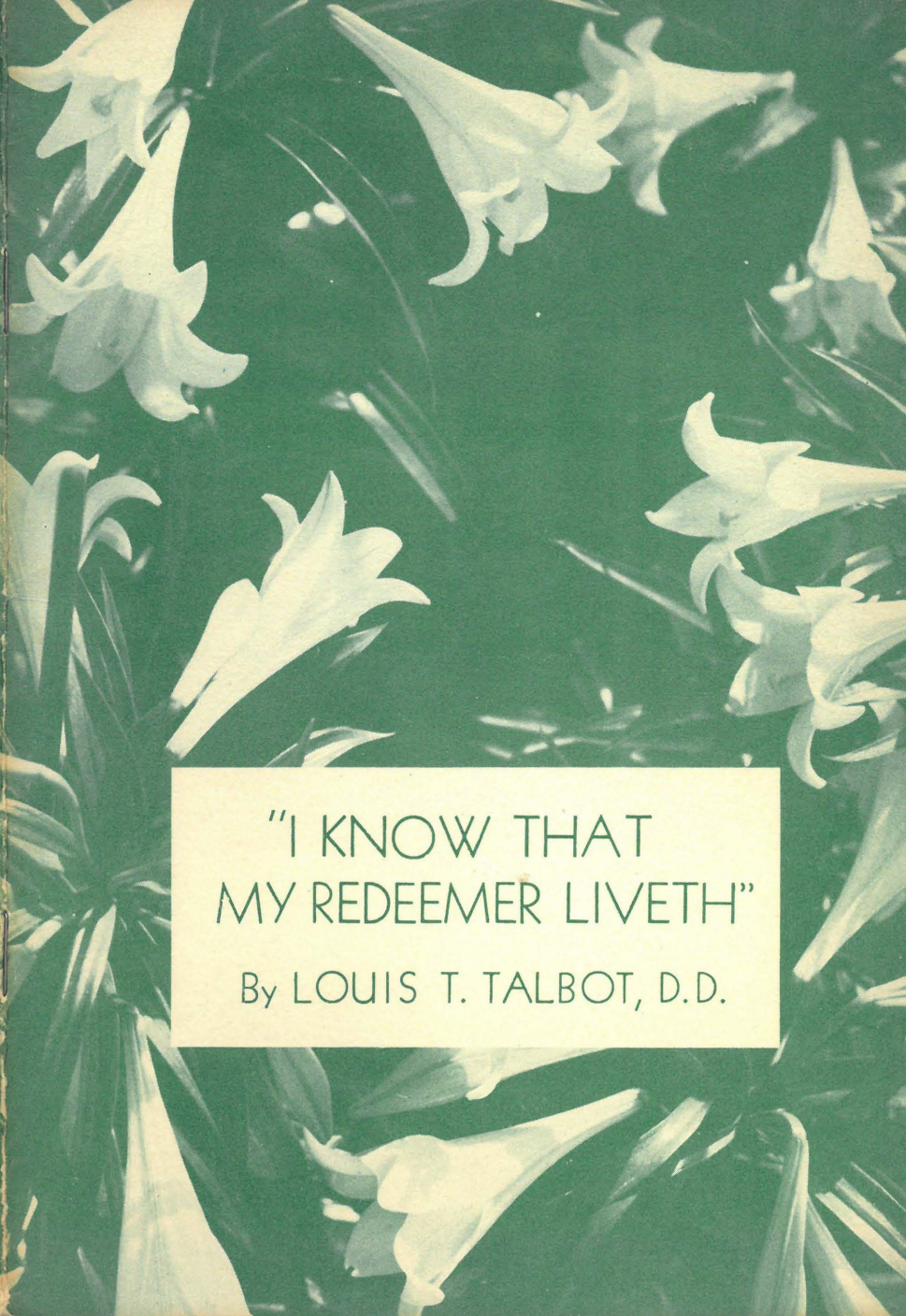


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"I KNOW THAT
MY REDEEMER LIVETH"

By LOUIS T. TALBOT, D.D.

"I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVETH"

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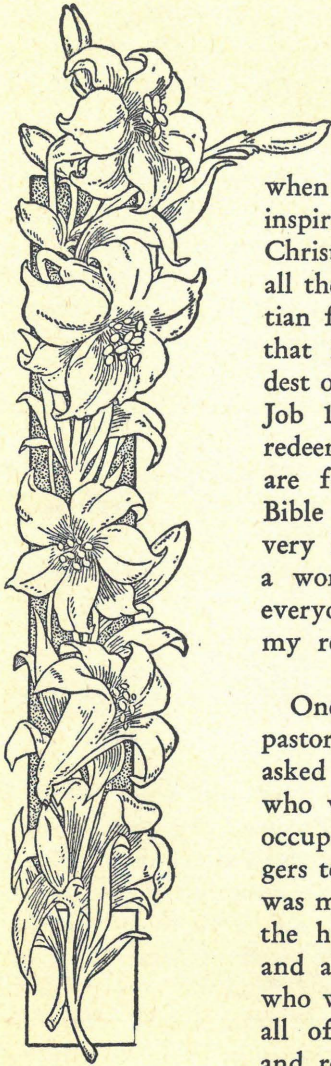
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This is the Easter season, the gladdest season of all the year, the time when we dwell anew upon that joy-inspiring fact of the resurrection of Christ, that certainty which underlies all the other certainties of the Christian faith. And so I have a message that is in keeping with this gladdest of all days. My text is found in Job 19:25: "For I know that my redeemer liveth." These seven words are found near the center of the Bible and they are certainly the very heart of the Scriptures. What a wonderful thing it would be if everyone could say: "I know that my redeemer liveth."

One cold wintry day during a pastorate in the Middle West, I was asked to call at the home of a woman who was said to be dying. All the occupants of the home were strangers to me. On entering the house, I was met by a man who proved to be the husband of the dying woman, and also by her mother and father who were there—and the attitude of all of them was one of bitterness and resentment.

When I introduced myself as a minister of the gospel, they cried out with vehement rudeness, "If you have a God, He must be a monster to permit what is going on upstairs!"

They declared in one breath that they did not believe in God and in the next that they did—but that they had no confidence in His love, His mercy, or His justice.

"If you want us to believe in your God," the husband blurted out, "let Him now restore my wife to health."

"Yes," the parents chimed in, "let Him raise our daughter from this deathbed."

I tried to speak calmly. "My friends," I replied, "I know there is a God, and that He is merciful as well as just. His Word says so. But you can never get anything from Him by approaching Him in the belligerent attitude you are showing.

"And now," I added, "may we go to the patient's room?"

Not too willingly, someone led the way. When I entered that bedroom, it seemed to me I was passing from Satan's territory into Heaven itself, for the one whom I met there had that sweet, confident restfulness which belongs only to the children of God. I sat by her bedside and spoke to her of the Saviour and of Heaven. I am not sure how many scriptures I read to her—precious passages on which she and every other sinner must rest his or her faith—but the following must have been among them:

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, *that he might bring us to God*" (I Pet. 3:18).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath *everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life*" (John 5:24).



When I asked the question, "Are you sure that when you pass out of this world you will go to be with Christ?" she replied with beautiful confidence, "'I know that my Redeemer liveth.'"

Just then the husband came into the room and the

wife beckoned him to come near. She put her arms around him and told him that she was going to Heaven. She tried to express to him what Christ meant to her, how He had enabled her to live victoriously and was empowering her to die triumphantly. She told him also that if he would put his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and accept Him as his Saviour, they two would meet again.

A few moments later, the father and mother who had said such hard words against the love and mercy of God, also entered the room. Their daughter spoke to them persuasively of the grace and love of God, and reminded them that she had earnestly endeavored to lead them all to Christ.

"It may be," she said, "that this is God's way of bringing you to give heed to those things that are really worth while."

Two hours later, she passed into the presence of the Redeemer whom she loved.

That afternoon, I had the privilege of leading the husband and also the father and mother to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Their lives during the years which followed revealed that a real heart change had taken place with each of them.

"Just think," they often would exclaim rapturously, "now all of us are going to be 'ever with the Lord!'"

In order that all of my readers may be able to give the same testimony and have the same assurance I want to dwell for a little while on the great words of this text: "I know that my redeemer liveth."

Let me divide the text into four parts in order that we may fully ascertain the meaning:

- I. "I Know."
- II. "Redeemer."
- III. "Liveth."
- IV. "My."



I. "*I Know.*" An intelligent believer can say, "I know," not merely by faith but because the resurrection of Christ is the most thoroughly authenticated fact of history. If you accept evidence, plain reasonable evidence, you must believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

A number of years ago in England, there was an infidel club that met regularly, to which some of the greatest agnostics and free-thinkers of England belonged. In the course of many meetings two great jurists were requested by the club to undertake to disprove absolutely two great doctrines of the Christian faith. One was the story of the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the other was the conversion of Saul of Tarsus as recorded three times in the Book of Acts. Feeling that these doc-

trines were the cornerstones of Christianity, the club commissioned Lord Littleton and Gilbert West, the jurists to bring in absolute proof of their falsity.

These men took some time to investigate and when the club assembled to hear their reports, to the amazement of everyone present, Lord Littleton got to his feet and said, "I have taken the evidence in this case and have weighed it just as carefully as in any great case that I have had to deal with and have concluded that Jesus of Nazareth who died on Calvary's Cross and was buried in Joseph's new tomb in the garden, got up out of that tomb on the third day just as the Scriptures say He did and I have accepted Him as my Saviour and am His disciple."

Is that not thrilling? That is what I call an honest investigation. He not only was convinced but convinced to the point where he accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord.

Gilbert West also decided that Saul of Tarsus was converted the way the Bible says that he was and he also became a disciple of Christ. Yes, and even those who have not accepted Christ would have to accept the resurrection as an historical fact if time were taken to weigh the evidence.

But every believer has other manifold assurances of the resurrection of Christ. He meets Christ in personal experience. After conversion, Christ becomes a daily Friend and Companion, and the Guide of life's pathway. And, as the believer prays, he learns that prayer is real, and answers do come, and that the promises of Christ are genuine. Day by day, Christ becomes to the believer the power to live victoriously, and the grace to die triumphantly, so that he declares with Job of old, "I know".



II. "*Redeemer.*" We shall look for a moment now at the second word, "*Redeemer.*" It is one of the great words of Scripture. It means "to deliver by payment of a price; to purchase out of the slave market."

When I was a boy, I remember reading a story in one of the school books that fascinated me greatly. It was the account of a sailor who had served twenty years in the penitentiary, and on the day of his release from the prison, he was walking along one of the streets of London where he met a bird-seller. The man had a great many birds in a cage that was on the corner of the sidewalk. The liberated prisoner, as he looked at the birds, thought of his own incarceration in the penitentiary. He went to the bird-seller and asked him the price of all the birds. When the price was named, the sailor handed the amount over and then, to the amazement of the man, he opened the door of the cage and set all the birds free. And as the birds flew away, they seemed to chirp, "You have redeemed us."

The liberation was through the payment of a price, and that is what Christ came into the world to do. He came to be a Redeemer and He could be this only by going to Calvary's Cross and paying the debt of sin. In the Bible we read of Christ's death: "Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." Christ must stand in man's place.

But, praise God, Christ did bear our sins, and made full, complete and perfect payment. And the results of this payment were that Jesus Christ became the Redeemer

of the world, abundantly able to forgive, liberate and forever set free. Truly, some of our poor hearts know the meaning of the term "Redeemer" for we have known experimentally what it is to be set free from the enslaving shackles of terrible sin.

Dr. Scofield points out that there are three words translated "redemption" in the Scriptures. One word means "to purchase in the market"—in which there is the thought of a slave market. Another word implies "to buy out of a market." And still another word suggests "to loose" or "to set free by paying a price." The Saviour performed all these services on behalf of the believer.

Our heavenly inheritance was mortgaged by sin, and we were utterly unable to pay the debt, to satisfy God's justice for sin, to renew our mortgage, and to provide a new settlement of our inheritance. A picture of our condition is seen in the experience of Ruth, the Moabitish woman. As the widow of Mahlon, she was involved with her first husband in his losses and liabilities. But when she became the wife of Boaz, the redeemer of her estate and the lord of the harvest, she and her inheritance were redeemed, and she became the sharer of his wealth and social standing. In Christ, we who in Adam were condemned and alienated, are justified and reconciled.

Just as truly we were slaves of Satan and justly doomed to eternal woe, having no kinsman to vindicate our cause and interpose for us by power or price. We were sold under sin.

Easter however, calls to our minds the matchless grace of Christ our Redeemer, who, veiling His deity in human flesh that He might sympathize, suffer and save, paid a terrible price in order to redeem His enemies from their

curse. He "gave himself a ransom for all." By His own blood, He redeemed us from sin and the grave, and by His power He conquered our murderer. Hallelujah, what a Saviour!

The story is told of a Russian officer whose accounts could not be made to balance and who feared that the merciless despotism of the empire would allow no room for leniency in dealing with him. While hopelessly pouring over his balance sheet, and in despair of ever making up his deficiency, he wrote half inadvertently on the page before him, "Who can make good this deficit?" And then he fell asleep at his table.

The Czar, passing by, saw the sleeping officer, glanced curiously at the pages, and taking up the pen wrote underneath the question these words: "I, even I, Alexander."

Who is there who is sufficiently able to pay the sinner's debt to a broken law? There is One who died and rose again, and from the cross of Calvary, from the tomb in the garden, from the throne in heaven, He answers: "I, even I, the Lord Jesus."

My friend, have you claimed your redemption? Many a Negro lived on in servitude, even after Abraham Lincoln had proclaimed the emancipation of all American slaves. Christ died to ransom you—but are you free? You may be free, now and forever, if you will act upon His clear commands in the Word of God. Can you say, my reader, "I know that my redeemer liveth"? Has He borne away your sins and have you been joined to Him by faith and today are you rejoicing in the peace of God, that peace which passeth all understanding? That is the blessing that you may enter into this moment—to know Christ, the Redeemer, the Saviour, by saying, "I know."



III. "*Liveth.*" The next word in this text is "liveth." "I know that my redeemer liveth." And, of course, Job, in these words, foresaw not so much the birth of Christ, but His resurrection. And because He lives, we too shall live. Is there someone reading this message who is fearful lest he cannot live the Christian life? You would like to know the joy and peace of sins forgiven, but the question is: How about tomorrow? You feel that you would like to take your stand for Christ and join the great throng of believers in saying, "I know that my redeemer liveth," but what about tomorrow? The answer to tomorrow is, my friends, "He lives." Yes, Jesus Christ lives. He, who was born so wonderfully, who lived so beautifully and who died vicariously. The Tomb contains Him no longer. Today, this very day, He lives and you may safely place your entire confidence in His hands.

Some years ago I was giving some addresses in the Folsom Prison, California, and at the close of one of the services, a young man said to me, "Brother Talbot, my difficulty will begin in four days." I said, "What do you mean, why four days?" He replied, "I was converted in this prison and in four days I am to be paroled and that means that I will face the old gang, live in the old neighborhood, and meet with the old surroundings that caused my downfall." I reminded him that the old surroundings would have no dominion over him if he bore in mind that Christ lives, if he would look to the risen Christ to Whom he might appeal day by day. If he would

do this, he would be given strength for every circumstance, for every need.

Martin Luther would dispel all despondency with the one word, "vivat," the Latin for "He lives." Many times he seized a piece of chalk and wrote "vivat" on the study table. When asked for an explanation, He answered, "Jesus lives, and if He were not among the living, I could not wish to live even for an hour." Let us, my fellow-believers, engrave this Easter truth, "He lives," in our hearts, for if we remove the Easter reality from our faith, we have less hope than the heathen. A living Christ means salvation, a power-sustaining Companion, divine counsel, eternal habitation and never-ending happiness.



IV. "My." Now I want to bring this message to a close by calling your attention to the little personal pronoun, "My," which is found in the text. "I know that *my* redeemer liveth." Christ is a personal Redeemer. Of course, He is *the* Redeemer who died for the whole wide world but the question is: Is he *your* Redeemer? Have you put that little word, my, into your text? This word, my, reminds me of a story I heard in connection with David's statement, "The Lord is *my* shepherd."

A colporteur, going through Switzerland, saw a little shepherd boy minding his flock. Taking out his Bible, the man tried to teach the little fellow to read the Twenty-Third Psalm, but he failed. The boy could learn only the first five words, and he memorized these by saying them on his five fingers, a finger for each word: "The Lord is my shepherd."

The colporteur left him, and it was not until four years later that he was able to return. He was interested to know about the boy, and sought him out in his home. The child's mother received him graciously, and when she found he was the man who had taught her son the Scripture verse, she said with tears: "My boy is dead, but he said that if I ever saw you, I should tell you that he died holding the fourth finger of his hand—"The Lord is *my* shepherd.'"

My dear friend, the Lord Jesus Christ can be "your" Saviour today because of the glorious and all transcending fact of His resurrection. Were He still in the borrowed tomb there could be no real personal appropriation of His saving grace. But because He rose, because He lives, you and I today can know the glad exultancy of present day salvation and safekeeping. There may be some who read these lines who know Him not. May we plead with you that you claim Him as yours today.

If you can claim the Lord as *your* Shepherd, as your personal Saviour, then you will go on your way rejoicing. You may know a great deal about Christ; you may have heard the Gospel preached many times. You may be a regular church-goer and a good living person, but, my friend, is he *your* Redeemer and can you place that little word, "my," in the heart of this Scripture? There is no necessity for being lost. Christ died for us, to save us, and He lives to keep. Will you take Him as your Saviour now?

