

Christ is Victor

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“God is able to rebuild your broken life”

There are always certain danger signals which become quite evident when one's physical or spiritual health declines. We respond to signs of physical deterioration by running instantly to a trusted doctor for advice and treatment. We are certainly not indifferent to the danger signals which could mean an impending heart attack. I simply can't understand how thinking people can be indifferent to the moral decay around them and in their own families.

Jeremiah, who wept over the sins of Israel, not only saw the deep spiritual and moral decline but also warned them of the imminent Judgment of God. Had the people of Israel heeded his timely warning and repented of their sins, they would have saved themselves and their children from innumerable ills and sufferings.

I have noticed that in most people, when they have committed a tragic blunder or grieved God greatly, there comes a period of deep darkness, when they seem quite incapable of seeing or recognizing their fallen state. This period of spiritual blindness lasts long enough to do serious damage to a person or family. By the time they awake, it is often too late to undo the harm. Irreparable loss is sustained and the children are ruined. The pain and loss due to the initial disobedience remains for generations. The marks of our disobedience are plainly printed on our posterity.

When the fruit of youthful sins and the effects of the disobedience of later years are so devastating, how deeply one should repent for every deflection from the path of holiness and seek Christ's pardon with real brokenness!

Jeremiah laments, “Renew our days as of old.” This is not a mere nostalgic reference to the “good old days.” Sometimes this phrase can be very misleading. In our days knowledge has greatly increased. Hence rapid changes are taking place around us. The stranglehold of some superstitious traditions [is] broken, and with the rubbish, some useful standards of conduct too have been discarded. The sacred institute of marriage is being belittled by those who break God's laws and wreck their own homes.

From twenty years to thirty, it is a pretty fast lap in the race of life. By the time the wildly speculating and dashing twenty-year-olds crash through the thirty-year barrier, they are disillusioned, broken, haggard, weary and jaded. What is more, some of them are bitter and frustrated. They simply want to forget their teenage years and their wild twenties.

Jeremiah knew that God had promised His children that they would be the head and not the tail if they would obey His laws and statutes (Deut. 28:13). Further, the unerring manner in which God had led His children out of their slavery in Egypt, across the Red Sea and through the wilderness, where nothing practically grew, was indelibly written on the consciousness of Jeremiah. Thus, it was quite natural for him to pray, “Lord, come back to us; Lord, renew us.”

True spiritual renewal is necessary for every child of God, for every church or missionary Fellowship like ours. The Lord Jesus said that the Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. What an insignificant and tiny little thing is the mustard seed! But life comes out of it and it grows until the birds can come and lodge on its branches. So does new life grow in a humble and broken-hearted man.

When the new life begins, significant things begin to happen. Where life had become dull, painful and boring, new strength and grace break forth. How many have told me of their thoughts and plans to end their lives. In the midst of their gloom and darkness, the Lord Jesus suddenly met them. Their lives were so completely transformed that none would recognize

them as the same people.

It is the powers of darkness which tell you, “End it all; one leap, one plunge, one gulp of poison and it is all over. Your misery will end.” No, that is not true. Real misery begins in hell, “where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.” It is an awful sin to attempt to kill yourself. God says, “Thou shall not kill.” Death is no cure for anyone's misery but it only adds agony and sorrow to those around you.

Let us be positive, let us give one chance to God. When you study the Bible and begin to tell your need to the Living and Loving God, hope begins to break out and trust in the Saviour who cares begins to warm your cold heart.

Have you lost your health? Ask the Lord Jesus to give it back. I well remember the doctor who was brought to my boyhood home in a taxi. The sad-looking wife and the taxi-driver helped the paralytic into the house. My father prayed for him. A few days after, the same man walked away unaided from our house. Ask the Lord to renew your health.

There are many today who have weak nerves. I tell them, “Ask Jesus to give you new nerves, strong nerves.” Where there is lovelessness, much negative talk and bitterness, there is ample chance to get bad nerves. Love is the cure.

Our God is the God of new beginnings. He is the God of Renewal and Revival. When an old car is junked after several years of use, no one attempts to repair it. Your life may seem to be beyond repair, you have wrecked and damaged it so greatly, but Jesus is able to renew you completely. That is why the unique term is applied to Him. He is the Saviour indeed! Let us not allow our pride to be a stumbling block to our progress.

— Joshua Daniel

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“God’s Spirit and fire in your life”

Matthew 3:11: “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.”

Here Jesus is speaking about repentance. Repentance is the beginning of Christian life. But as we go on further, we find dross in us. The idols we have entertained have left much filth in us. Ezek. 36:25: “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.” We need to be cleansed from this filth. God has made provision for this. Jesus will baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. When Isaiah was brought face to face with God, he

found himself unworthy. He cried out that he was a man of unclean lips. He needed cleansing, and God gave it to him through fire from the altar before His throne. Our lips are not worthy to speak the eternal Word. God is able to cleanse us from such dross.

At conversion, you feel you are a desperate sinner. Once again after conversion, you feel desperate at the amount of dross that the Word of God and the presence of God lay bare to you. Are we fit to preach the Word of God? No, there is dross in us. But God has made provision for us that the dross may be cleansed. When the Holy Spirit and the fire of the Holy Spirit [come] into us, that dross will go. But just one such experience is not enough.

When one enters the responsibility of

marriage, one needs a further cleansing by the fire. When one begets children, one needs another touch of that fire. This humble attitude must continue in us and do its work in us. We must maintain singleness of eye.

Jesus asked Peter to launch out into the deep. We have to launch out deeper in our spiritual life, and then cast our nets on the right side. This means casting our nets where God wills. God watches us if our desire is for the highest life—the life of Jesus! Isaiah and Elijah seem to have had such desire and saw it fulfilled. God gave it to them. God is watching our personal devotion and consecration to bless us with the deeper life.

—N. Daniel

“From Klansman to Christian”

Thomas A. Tarrants III was raised in Mobile, Alabama, in the American Deep South of the 1950s and 1960s. He went to church regularly as a boy, but the teachings that he heard did not sink in. By around the age of 13, he had heard enough of the Bible to become aware that there was a place called hell— to which he did not wish to go. Somewhat motivated, he made a profession of Christian faith and was baptised, but there was no spiritual rebirth, no new life in Jesus Christ. In fact, life got worse.

When Tarrants was a high school student, the civil rights movement was gathering momentum. He became very angry about that and protested, associating with others who were like-minded and becoming increasingly indoctrinated with far-right ideology, racism, and anti-Semitism. His anger increased towards these people, thinking that they were destroying America and trying to overthrow constitutional government and white supremacy.

Ideas have consequences. Imbibing error has very harmful consequences. Taking in all of that hatred was like having a heart transplant—albeit receiving a heart filled with hatred,

anger, and racism that would poison his system. As Jesus taught, “You shall know the tree by the fruit”—and Tarrants’ hatred began to manifest in violence towards people who were different to him. It brought him to a place of leaving Alabama, going to Mississippi, and becoming involved with a group called the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, which, according to the FBI, was the most violent right-wing terrorist organisation in America at that point.

Tarrants’ engagement came to a screeching halt one night when he and a young female school teacher, also part of a terrorist cell, went to plant a bomb at the home of a Jewish businessman in Meridian, Mississippi. This businessman’s only crime had been to speak out for civil rights and against the Klan’s violence in Mississippi. The FBI, however, had become aware of the plan, and, working with local police, twenty-six men were lying in wait, heavily armed, dressed in black, and hiding.

At about 1AM in the morning, the two accomplices went to deliver the bomb. As Tarrants was taking it out of the cardboard at the intended location, shots suddenly rang out, and

he dropped the bomb on the concrete driveway. It should have exploded—but it did not. That was miracle number one. His accomplice helped him to get back in the car and they sped off in a hail of gunfire—but, in the midst of a round of rifle fire, she was hit and died on the scene. A police car followed hot in pursuit, his tires were shot out, and Tarrants came to a halt. He got out and opened fire; one officer took three rounds in the chest, including one in the heart—and a miracle occurred, for the officer did not die. Tarrants, for his part, was also hit and might have been finished off had not an ambulance appeared. Taken to hospital, he was told that if he lived forty-five minutes it would be a miracle. He did; God spared his life. “Obviously I did not deserve to live—but God is a God of mercy, and He does some very strange things. This was one of them,” he later said.

Tarrants was eventually convicted and sentenced to thirty years in a Mississippi state prison, then one of the worst prisons in America. Rather than seek to reform, though, he went there with one thing in mind: how to resume what he had been doing. In the space of about six months, he

“FROM KLANS...”CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

REALITY CHECK!

**“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land”
(2 Chronicles 7:14).**

“Stories of answered prayer”

“Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me” (Psalm 50:15).

In the summer of 1908, Rosalind Goforth, a Christian missionary to China, had to return home to Canada with five of her children. In *How I know God answers prayer*, a collection of stories from her life that she wrote, she shared accounts of this time on furlough.

“Reaching Toronto, I learned that my eldest son was at death’s door from repeated attacks of rheumatic fever. ... [A]s I recalled the times in which he had been given back to us from the very gates of death, my faith was strengthened to believe for his recovery again. But, as I prayed, it became very clear that the answer to my petition depended on myself ... I must yield myself and my will to God.

I had been planning to take no meetings during that furlough, but to devote myself wholly to my children. I confessed the sin of planning my own life, and definitely covenanted with the Lord that if He would raise my son for His service I would take meetings, or do anything, as He opened the way for the care of the children.

There were six difficult doors, however, that would have to be opened ... before I could possibly go out and speak for Christ and China, as God seemed to be asking. First, the Lord would need to restore my son to complete health, as I could never feel justified in leaving a sick child. Second, He would need to restore my own health, for I had been ordered to the hospital for an operation. Third, He would need to keep all the other children well. Fourth, a servant must be sent to take care of the house—though my income was so small. ... Fifth, a Christian lady would need to be willing to take care of the children, and act as my housekeeper in

my absence from home. Sixth, sufficient money would need to be sent to meet the extra expenses incurred by my leaving home.

Yet, as I laid these difficulties before the Lord, I received the definite assurance that He would open the way.

My son was brought back to Toronto on a stretcher, the doctor not allowing him to raise his head; but on arrival he would not obey orders, declaring that he was so well he could not and would not remain still. Fearing the consequences of his disobeying orders, I telephoned the doctor to come at once. On his arrival he gave the lad a thorough examination, and then said: “Well, I cannot make him out; all I can say is, let him do as he pleases.”

Within a month the boy was going back to his high school, apparently quite well.

As for myself, I did not go to the hospital; for all the symptoms that had seemed to require it left me, and I became perfectly well. A servant was sent to me who did her work sympathetically, as helping me to do the Lord’s work. A married niece, living near, offered to stay in the home whenever I needed to be absent.

And so there remained but one condition unfulfilled—the money. But I believed this would come as I went forward; and it did. Each month that followed, as I made up my accounts, I found that my receipts exceeded my expenditures sufficiently to enable me to spend money for work in China, and to purchase things which I needed for China.

[A]s the days and weeks and months passed, and all went well, I learned to trust.

“Be still; be strong today.”

But, Lord, tomorrow?

What of tomorrow, Lord?

Shall there be rest from toil,
Be truce from sorrow?
“Did I not die for thee?
Do not I live for thee?
Leave Me tomorrow.”

[H]ad I been living a life of ease or self-indulgence, I could not have been justified in expecting God to undertake for me in such matters as are here recorded. It must be remembered that I had stepped out into a life which meant trusting for everything.”

Another account is below.

“I feel that the Lord saw that I had given up all for Him, so just showed how He could provide, thus evidencing His love and care for my dear children. We had set up housekeeping at the end of the fruit season, and so I had not been able to do canning for winter use. That winter ... [a]ltogether seventy jars of the finest fruit were sent to us. I will give the details of just one of these gifts.

Shortly before leaving home for ten days, the servant informed me that the canned fruit was finished. Accordingly I went down and ordered enough dried fruit to last till I should return. On reaching home I was greeted at the door by a rush from the children, all trying at once to tell me that a lovely valentine had just arrived. Leading me back to the kitchen, they showed me the table covered with twenty jars of the most delicious-looking fruit, and a large can of maple syrup. On a card accompanying the gift was written: ‘A valentine for our dear “substitute in China,” from her sisters in Renfrew.’”

—Rosalind Goforth, *How I know God answers prayer* (1921)

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“From Klansman to Christian”

developed an escape plan, recruited other inmates, reconnected with some of his former acquaintances, and pulled off a successful escape.

A couple of days later, Tarrants was hiding with others on an abandoned farm in a heavily wooded area, from which place they took turns watching an old dirt road that went by. They thought themselves to be pretty clever and that the escape had been successfully pulled off. However, as the Bible says, “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” That day, Tarrants was standing watch and relieved early by one of the group, only to hear an incredible barrage of gunfire soon after his return to camp from where he had just been. It did not take long until the voice of a special agent in charge of the FBI in Mississippi spoke over a bullhorn: “Your accomplice is dead and I’m giving you one chance to surrender.”

Tarrants ended up in prison again, this time in a little 6x9 cell that was most the secure place there. With two fifteen-minute shower trips per week only, he was largely confined to the cell and spent much of his time reading. At first he read various racist, anti-Semitic, and neo-Fascist political theories that interested him, but after a while he began to read classical philosophy, writers such as Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics. Consequently, a couple of ideas distilled in his mind. The first was that man needs to seek truth. The truth exists independently of preferences and wishes; it is an objective reality that can be discovered and must be sought. Secondly, Socrates had said that the unexamined life is not worth living. This set Tarrants on a different path, one of seeking truth and examining his life.

After about a year of such reading, Tarrants had a thought to read the Bible, the Gospels. He began to do so, and something happened. As he began to read the Gospels, which spoke of Jesus and His life, his eyes began to be opened to see things that he had not seen before in his exposure to the Bible. One verse that struck him powerfully said: “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” Tarrants began to see that that was what he had been doing; his political ideology was an idol in his life, the integrating centre

of his life and everything that he was about. He began to realise that what he was doing was wrong, that he had been committing sins his whole life. The narrative to which he had adhered was that he and those like him were fighting for God and country—not that bombing was wrong but that others were. All of that now got blown up. He began to see that he was sinning against God. All the hatred and violence was part of a bigger life centred on him, on self.

Once Tarrants came to see his sin and his need for forgiveness, things began to look a lot different. He learned some things by heart. “God loved the world so much,” he would later say, “the world of fallen, messed up, screwed up, wacko nut-jobs like me—God loved the world so much that He sent His only Son to die to pay for our sins so that whoever really believes in Jesus—not this kind of shallow, casual, nominal, intellectual assent, but a true belief and commitment to Jesus Christ—might not perish but have everlasting life.” That was the message that Tarrants needed. One day, he got on his knees and asked Jesus to take over his life, forgive Him for his sins, and do whatever he wanted.

Something changed in Tarrants. He began to have different desires. There was a reorientation of his heart. It was not about a list of dos and don’ts, of rules, but about a change within, a desire to know God and to be different, to please God, to live a different life. He wanted to read the Bible and pray; sometimes he would read the Bible for hours a day, unable to get enough of it as it was like a new book to him, alive and speaking to him. As he continued to read God’s Word, he began to see areas in his life that were a mess and needed to change. That was the summer of 1970. God, out of the mess and wreckage of his life, had begun a work to change him. He delivered him from the hatred, racism, and violent impulses, and He gave him love for people.

God made a way for Tarrants to be released after only eight years, although his sentence had grown to be thirty-five years. The warden who interviewed him as he was trying to reduce the overcrowded prison population listened to his story and gave him a chance to make something out of his life. Tarrants went on to study at the University of Mississippi

before moving to Washington DC and becoming involved in addressing issues of racial reconciliation.

“It’s by grace you’ve been saved...” That grace set Tarrants, a former Klansman, on a path of faith, transformation, and love. 2 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

—This is based on a spoken testimony. For further reading, see Thomas A. Tarrants, *Consumed by Hate, Redeemed by Love* (Thomas Nelson, 2019).

Weekly Meetings —Welcome to All—

Sunday Morning Worship at 10:00 am at:

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University of Michigan Mondays 7:00pm

Angell Hall, Room G-144

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University Community Church.

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Des Moines, IA: 1460 (KDMI)

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Fort Wayne, IN: 1090 AM (WFCV) Sat. 4:00 pm

Council Bluffs, IA: 1560 AM (KLNG) Sun. 8:00am

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