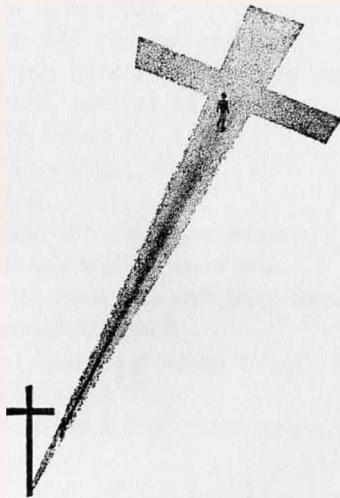


THESE THINGS REMAIN

by

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by

Charles Sanders

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Tomorrow morning your alarm clock will go off about
three hours too early.

You will grumble, turn over,
reach for it, shut it off,
grumble some more, fight your way out,
and pull on something to go to work in.

You will eat too much fat and sugar,
not enough protein,
you will eat it too fast,
too taut and tied up, and
as soon as you have swallowed the last bite,
you'll call, for any to hear,
I'm Gone!

You will catch your ride,
or your bus,
or fight for a parking place
and another day will be upon you.

On your way to town you will have developed heartburn
from having hurried too much,
from having eaten the wrong things too fast—
so you'll take a Tum
or soothe it with some patented

foaming
elixir

in a drugstore glass,

and then you'll open the door to your temple.

You'll check stock, or sort vegetables, or read yesterday's
mail.

Soon you will squeeze a pair of shoes onto a customer,
or you'll look for hat sizes, or you'll weigh turnips.

Running on a separate track all the time, your mind
will be

fishing,
or wishing,
or worrying.

Likely it will be worrying—and, of course, about pay-day
—for pay-day just

won't
reach.

The note is over-due,

the insurance has lapsed,
the baby's teeth need attention,
your wife seems too tired all the time,
your job isn't much to begin with,
besides,
no one really appreciates you
anyway.

Then—it's *Coffee-Time*,

Sacred Interval!

and you get a break.

A little bit picked up in spirit, you come back to work
and worry

about

the children's report cards,
your daughter's dating habits, or
that she either did or will marry
the wrong fellow, too young.

Last month's bills,

neighbor's fence line,

maybe you ought to see

the Doctor about yourself,

yet,

"Here I've worked twenty years and have no savings
at all except that little bit of lapsed insurance"
and you're glad you've got it,
and wish the premium were paid.

And then *Lunch-Time*—

Blessed Break!

You swallow a bowl of soup, bolt a sandwich, wonder why

you are nervous—

some drug-store radio blares the word

of one great General's important word
against

another great General's important
word—

You wish you knew

which set of stars

on which shoulder

had all the right of it,

and, in the back of your mind,

feel a little guilty because

you are not more concerned.

But the whole business drops through the grating of your
mind, out of sight, for

you must go by and make a payment on that small
loan over-due—and

to do it you borrow from another until

pay-day.

Late getting back, you have seventeen customers—sell three
—and the boredom is unbearable along with the waves of
heat coming in from the already hot street. You wish you
had it as easy as your brother—who is getting rich teaching
school—or your sister—who married oil or cattle, and

after a while,

eternity,

it is *Quitting-Time*.

Hallowed Rest!

But you know the boss knows

that you know the boss knows

how poor a day you really had.

You get into five o'clock traffic and, if lucky, you get
home at last, fighting all the way. Yet, even there,

the kids are cross,

not cleaned up,

your wife exhausted.

the landlord won't paint your house,

though you've bought it four times in rent;
your little old garden is half-dead—
in spite of your seven-dollar water bill,
and so
there's nothing to do but
eat too much supper since you haven't eaten right
all day,

and then,
loggy and tired and bored
you fall into bed at last,

muttering

"Nothing That I Did Today Matters!

If I had put a label on everything I did today
it would have to read

<p>THIS PRODUCT IS NOT GUARANTEED BEYOND SIXTY DAYS</p>

It wasn't put together right,
It wasn't made of the right stuff,
it won't stand up under use,
it will break down."

"If I hadn't done a thing all day
it wouldn't matter!

Nothing I do matters
or counts,
or lasts after Pay-Day."

This man is Legion! There are *thousands* of him.
And—He is sick!

Dangerously sick!

He needs a spirit within that will give life real meaning.
He needs something to take him over the dullness and the
prosaicness of all his every-day-ness. This fellow is sick.
He needs to be able to feel he has made some progress. He
needs a feeling of significance. He needs to know that he
matters. In some way he must get what he so desperately
lacks—confidence, courage, faith, love of himself, and time!

He needs to know that his part matters, that his life can be a contribution, that his yearnings can be met. He needs something bigger than he to consume him and set him on fire.

But his name is Legion—he is everywhere and his troubles are everywhere.

Yet, he is still sick. The fact that most of us have whatever he has does not make us well. People like this are spiritually sick. All cities today have within them great lines of purposeless people—“deracinated hordes” whose only real desires are to be well fed,

reasonably unbored,

and fairly well clothed.

Occasionally, one of them wakes up to the fact of his need. He begins to realize that although he does a number of things regularly and well,

that although he thinks a number of thoughts,

knows a reasonable number of facts,

he suddenly has become quite sure that none of them are

really worth thinking,

doing,

or

knowing.

But how can he escape the pattern? How can he become what he is not? How can he get out of what drudgery and the every-day-ness of everyday will do to Him? How will he escape the consequences of his neglected salvation?

Nothing he does endures beyond pay day.

Nothing he says matters.

Nothing he thinks has consequence.

All he sees decays

All he loves dies.

All he wants disappears.

All he has dreamed collapses.

How can he escape unless he finds some things that endure? What will he do unless he finds something that has survival value beyond the first of the month?

Does anything endure? Is there a thing that will remain? How can he, surrounded by decay,

find eternity,

for what he is and loves?

Every man ought to have some things that remain.

I watched a friend of mine offer to buy a handsome gun from the veteran craftsman who had made it. He was able to pay, he was interested enough to pay—and well.

The gun was a marvel of the builder's art. Many a day had gone into the inletting and chequering of that perfect walnut, the reshaped bolt and polished receiver, the true barrel and keen scope-sight, the fine trigger assembly and honed action.

"I'll buy," said my friend, "how much?"

And the old friend who had made it for himself, pouring years of skill and enjoyed work into the one perfect creation of his art, cradled the beautiful rifle across his arm, looked down at it, and said,

"I made it for my own—

nobody could buy it—

there isn't *anything* that

would *buy* it.

Perhaps my son will want it."

My friend with me smiled and got a good lift from it as he said to me a little wistfully—

"Every man ought to have something

that he wouldn't sell for *anything*!"

And that is true! Every man ought to have right in the middle of his life something that he wouldn't sell for *anything*.

It ought to be there—something that endures—the thing, the one thing that remains—right in the middle of his power, right in the middle of his life—right in the middle of where he has to live day by day—

Something that
nothing can
buy.

Not for Sale!

But what lasts? Nothing you can see lasts. Nothing tangible has eternal value. Houses cannot stay homes—stocks and bonds are not eternal—rifles rust—partnerships die—businesses fail—governments leave the gold standard—granite wears away.

Nothing you can see lasts. All tangibles perish; only intangibles survive. Time gets everything and men are caught!

Does Nothing endure?

Is there that that remains?

and can a man

get it

for himself?

and for his fellows?

That is the goal of religion! It is religion—and it is always of the spirit that anything survives.

It is here, right here, that religion has something to say. It is here, right here, that the Christian faith begins to cry,

These Things Remain

for any man

who will

take

them!

Here Christianity begins to say:

There is an eternal process at work among us!

All tangibles perish—the intangibles survive. The inexorable laws of life destroy all that can die. But the same laws of life that destroy all that can die create the conflict—the situation—in which

all that is fit to live

demonstrates its fitness for life!

That is why

our bodies die.

There is an eternal process at work among us.

The Christian lives. This we believe, and in believing, comes to new life; come to a relationship with the eternal, the intangible,

that that endures.

But what does he believe? How can it be that belief can do it? And what is the object of his belief?

What Christian can say it for them all? The Christ of each man's heart is different from that of other hearts. No Christian can speak for all other Christians. Personal, infinitely personal, is that inner grasp, but

this I believe,

I believe that God made Man.

I believe that God made Man

in His own Image.

I believe that God made Man as the crowning, finishing act of His preparatory Creation;

but,

I believe also

that God did not finish creating when He made Man.

That is to say,

I believe that Creation continues,

is not yet complete,

is far short of completion.

I believe God made Man in His Own Image,

crowning act of His preparation,

as His own *Agent* in

the completion of Creation;

and

so equipped this Man—

(who works and rides busses, and has

indigestion, and fusses

with his neighbors)—

so equipped this Man that he could provide himself

with the

tools he would need *to finish God's Creation.*

I believe, further, that Man cannot be God's Agent unless he has *responsibility*, that is, the ability to meet a situation. Responsibility is the ability to decide and the ability to put the thing over.

But, if Man has responsibility he must have not only the ability to succeed, he must have also
the ability *to fail*,
to lose out,
to defeat the Purpose.

If my agent has no power to fail he is not my agent. He is just a tool! If he has power only to succeed he has no responsible part and is but tool, hammer, anonymous puppet. But

Man is no puppet.
Of this I am sure.
He is able, responsible,
integer,
soul,
Person.

I believe Man has free moral choice.

I believe he is responsible to God.

I believe he can build or destroy.

I believe he has power not only to rob himself, but he can rob God for whom he is Agent in the business of completing Creation.

I believe Man has robbed himself and God as God's Agent. The Man I described in the beginning has the sickness that results from such a robbery. And his name is Legion.

Yet,

I believe it is contrary to God's Nature to fail.

I believe God will not use His Creation-power, by which He made us, to make failure.

I believe this means that God chooses for us to build, not destroy, to finish, not fail.

Therefore,

*I Believe God has put at work an eternal power to make
Man finish Creation.*

I believe one Name for that Power is TIME.

I believe this power presses every individual.

I believe it works with every culture and nation.

*I believe it operates in every civilization and it has
always the same pattern and order.*

*I believe you can find the operation of this pattern
in the death of every Nation.*

The death of every dying man and nation attests it.

You may find it in all life and every life.

*I believe it is there
to make God's Agent finish Creation.*

It appears like this:¹

*Cross
Suffering
Cleansing
Grace
New Life!*

or,
*Crisis
Passion
Purging
Release
Eternal Being!*

or,
*Conflict
Ordeal
Catharsis
Charisma
Resurrection!*

¹P. A. Sorokin, in *Crisis of Our Age*, sees this pattern: Cross—Ordeal—Catharsis—Charisma—Resurrection. They are all New Testament Terms.

I believe the twin wheels of the inexorable are always seen
to be in terms of

Cross — Suffering
Crisis — Ordeal
Conflict — Passion.

These are the grinding wheels of the inexorable. And by
“the inexorable” I mean that these are powers, forces, that
are written into life with such basic meaning that neither
prayer nor entreaty nor any other force can remove them.
They are inescapably and universally there right in life’s
middle!

These are the burning fires:

Cross!
Ordeal!

These are the eternal destroyers who are in this world
by God’s will
to mash all that will mash,
to crush all that will collapse,
to burn out all that will burn,
to purge out all that is false,
to destroy in you everything that can die.

The tangibles perish!

The things that you see cannot endure!

but

I believe

everything that does last, lasts through ordeal,
every human institution that survives, survives out
of crisis,
every human value goes on existing *after* the
Cross that tests it.

Everything

Eternal

Comes out of

a Crucible!

I believe every true religious word represents something that the relentless wheels of Cross and Ordeal could not crush.

All that lasts in life,

All that lasts of you,

All that lasts of your family,

All that lasts of your way of life,

government,

creed,

law,

philosophy,

and even

Personality,

comes along this route:

Cross

Suffering

Cleansing

Grace

New Life.

Now, *I believe*, too that the Power that destroys the dross becomes the Preserver of the worthy thing.

The eternal process that destroys is the same power that makes Man finish Creation.

But every term we have used

Cross — Crisis — Conflict

Ordeal — Suffering — Passion

Cleansing — Purging — Catharsis

Grace — Release — Charisma

Resurrection — Eternal Being — New Life

is emblazoned all through

the New Testament,

the life, death, and ascension of Jesus Christ,

the heart, purpose, and meaning of the

Christian Gospel!

It is *All* there.

and

I believe Jesus Christ is the cosmic, universal demonstration
in time of this

eternal principle of *Cross — Suffering — Cleansing —
Grace — New Life.*

I believe He came to give that process meaning for us all.

I believe that is why He is true.

I believe He is why that is true.

I believe He demonstrates that this
is back of him and ahead for us.

I believe this is why He is so vital, so tremendously vital,
for He came to show in His own body, so that we might
grasp it, the process that leads to the eternal.

I believe this pattern is common to all Life.

I have come to believe that in Him all of life's meaning
hangs together at last and stands demonstrated.

I believe that in Him and only in Him can the pattern
My Life *Must* take become one I can understand.

I believe that all history reveals the operation of that pat-
tern of Cross — Resurrection of which He, Christ, is the
Cosmic Demonstration.

I believe Jesus Christ is the "Hero with a thousand
faces" sought by countless men and nations who
never knew His Name.

I believe Him to be the clue they sought to the mean-
ing of Man's life of travail.

I believe Him as I never did before this pattern appeared
in my own experience.

I believe Him!

Redeemer,

Saviour,

Exemplar,

Leader,

Lord,

Son of God,

sent by God,

to make all religions but the true impossible

Sent by God to make it impossible, ultimately, for men who can think to believe anything but truth.

Sent by God to demonstrate even that the great powers of the rational minds of this world exist only to help this inexorable Cross burn everything else away but truth.

Sent by God

to show me

What it all means!

I believe that *in Him* a Man can take the road life forces him to take without being made a sick and perishing thing, apart from his creative purpose.

I believe that *in Him* this Cross — Suffering — Cleansing — Grace — New Life has its only chance to find me Eternal.

I Believe that *in Him*

a man's creative function will be fulfilled,
a man's enduring destiny will be consummated,
and his own personal powers will be found worthy of
eternity.

I believe Christ is God's meaning and Life's meaning.

He is Life's Hero and Saviour.

He, by my believing surrender, He,
Jesus Christ, can be appropriated
as my personal possession,
contemporary
companion.

I believe that only by the discovery and appropriation of *His own* Cross—suffering—cleansing—grace—New Life—only in Him and His — can any human being surmount the pressures of the inexorable that life imposes.

Only in Him is a Man worthy of the eternal!

Apart from Him we are all sick. Apart from Him, I am
sickest of all.

These things remain?

Better say

This Thing Remains:

He, Christ, Son of God, demonstrates, in His own body for me to receive, the pattern life will make me take to failure, unless I am content for Him to handle it with me as He handled it in Himself.

Only in Him is it true that "though my body be destroyed, yet shall I see"

Having Him to make life's meaning make sense makes us capable of doing mighty, enduring things. It makes of a home a place that lasts. It makes what a man feels for a woman endure across all the chasms that Time can bring and all the changes it can produce. It makes a Man's love for his children an abiding thing. It makes of his every-day job

not a hum-drum thing;

but

it becomes an

outpost

from which he helps finish Creation.

Christ gives life meaning!

THE HISTORY OF THE

of

the

