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*By*

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# THESE HUMAN ILLS!

By REV. MICHAEL X. FRASSRAND, C.S.P.

**I**N every age some people get only bitterness out of life. Sickness, poverty, loneliness and other ills are so common that even in ordinary times complete escape from them is impossible. Some of these may be over-powered and suppressed to a certain extent in one place, only to become doubly menacing in another. Sorrows, like life and death, are wrapped up in humanity, and are so common that, except in extraordinary times, the healthy and smiling world scarcely recognizes the part that is sick and sad. We of today have been overtaken so completely by one of these human ills that the happy world of our childhood seems to be gone beyond return. We are the victims of a double share of this world's bitterness. With some it has destroyed confidence in their fellowman; with others it has destroyed hope in God.

Even though depression is the subject uppermost in the minds of the people, it is not by any means the worst calamity that has overtaken man. It has not been accompanied by plagues such as, at other times, have carried away every second person; there has been no unusual amount of sickness; there has been no famine. Our sorrows arise largely out of a collapsed financial system; our pocket-books have been hurt; we have been left in debt, our property mortgaged, our laborers out of

jobs, our cities filled with the poor. These are the depression's chief terrors; hunger and want today, and uncertainty about tomorrow make this the greatest curse of our age. Although it is not the deepest affliction that man has had to face, it is a bitter and a tragic experience.

For radicals disgruntled with the whole of creation, and for demagogues who believe they are the beginning and end of all happiness, we see no way out. These think of life in the terms of money, pleasure, freedom from everything. The prosperity of an earlier day doomed, they have nothing to look forward to. But the world is still filled with hope and promise for the man who looks beyond the material store-houses of this earth for comfort. Things, bad for some, may prove blessings for others. A curse of the world may be a blessing of God. Better days await the believing!

### **An Ancient Depression**

Nineteen hundred years ago the Son of God came upon this earth of ours and found a people burdened far more heavily than anything we have ever known. If we may speak figuratively, they hardly knew the glory of the sunlight. The skies were overcast with persistent mists and fog. The sun was hidden, and so long had the darkness lasted that they had grown accustomed to it. They surely hoped for something better but scarcely expected ever to see it. The darkness was the poverty of the common people; their total

helplessness under the heel of their masters; sickness and disease that had to be borne patiently until death in the burial places and in the mountains away from relatives and friends. It is remarkable how men can accept the inevitable. In the Palestine that saw Christ, men had bowed their necks to the yoke and trudged along life's way broken in spirit. Into this darkness the Light of the World came. Our Blessed Savior was the Light!

These poor helpless people were the special objects of Christ's boundless sympathy. For them He labored, and with them He lived, partaking of their humble joys and entering into their sorrows. Search the records and we find no miracles for the haughty pharisee; no raising up from death sons and daughters of wicked kings; no special blessings for regiments of cruel soldiers. But behold Him addressing a poor blind man who had been excommunicated from synagogue services; stand by the country roadside and see the power of His love in action as He returns to a grieving widow the greatest earthly gift that could be given her, the life of her only son! Observe His response to the cry of the heart of an embarrassed woman prostrate at His feet: "Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee." And see the earth quiver and surrender its dead at His cry in behalf of two grief-stricken sisters: "Lazarus, come forth!"

A multitude of other sorrowing souls felt His presence among them. Truly the sun had ap-

peared in the skies; the long day of darkness was over. The Son of God had come, and the true Light of the world dispelled the gloom. There was no more weeping for the poor widow of Nāim; no longer a feeling of loneliness and desertion in the heart of Mary of Magdala; no longer that despair of better things among the poor of the land. The heavy yoke that for so long a time had pressed them down had been lifted. The slow heavy step of these down-trodden people had been quickened; eyes dimmed by their sorrows had been brightened; joy had returned to the land. Did they not have Him? There was no soul which He could not re-enliven; no broken heart that He could not heal.

### **He Has Not Abandoned Us**

It is true that after His work upon this earth had been completed, He returned to His heavenly home. But He has not abandoned us. In that greatest of all acts which consumed His life upon the cross, a new bond between God and the world was established. Just as among us, suffering produces the strongest bond and the deepest love that we know, so the agony on the cross has bound Christ to mankind with an everlasting love. Leaving this world, He could not forget it. Yes, it had persecuted Him, but for it He had suffered; we had become His children; children for whom He had paid the highest price. Such a world as that which produced a Calvary cannot be forgot-



ten. The earth is filled with Him; nature seems to be more buoyant and joyful because of His nearness. His delights are to be with the children of men.

“I will not leave you orphans,” He promised before departing from us. He could not leave the world as He had found it. The widow, the poor, the sick, the persecuted, the depressed had won a permanent place in His affections. He had spent long hours with them and sleepless nights treading the rough paths of Palestine in search of them. As Calvary that tormented Him must ever remain a place rich in sacred memories, and the most blessed spot of the whole world, so the heavily-laden and grief-stricken children for whom He lived and died must ever remain dear to His divine Heart. He simply could not leave them orphans.

Orphans have no home of their own; nowhere in particular to go; no father upon whom to lean in time of need, no mother in whom to confide. They must bear their pains, and suffer their wants alone. They have their burdens, their hours of loneliness, their desolate empty hearts and there is no one to whom they may go. To save us from that sad predicament, Christ brought forth the great mystery of remaining upon earth while taking possession again of His heavenly home. Never again would He abandon man, and leave him an orphan, He remained a companion in time of loneliness; to advise us in time of trouble; to console us in the hour of affliction.

### He Looks at the Heart

Surely He did not love the poor outcast of Jerusalem or Jericho more than the outcast of New York or Chicago; He did not feel deeper sympathy for the poor widow who had lost her only son than for the poor widow of today who must follow her child to its burial; no keener concern for the ten lepers than for the sick and dying in our tenement districts; no greater affection for the little children who surrounded Him than for the poor children who play on the sidewalks of our busy streets. He was on earth during the reign of Herod, but He loved those whom Herod oppressed no more than the lowly and oppressed under any other despot. The proof of His universal love, that is, love for all people at all times, is found in His teaching. He had no favorites among the races; he promised no tribe or nation choice places in heaven. He sent His messengers into the whole world and commanded that His Gospel be taught until the end of time.

Our Blessed Master is concerned with the interior disposition of a person rather than with the accidental circumstances of race, color, or age. It is the heart that counts; He looks at the mind, the will, and by these inward things judges whether one is worthy of His gifts.

This means that Christ is upon earth, and here for you. He is waiting for you to call upon Him as they of old cried out in their helplessness: "Jesus, have mercy on us!"



### Go in Search of Him

Christ sees your troubles and He is grieved by them even more than you are. No affliction can escape His searching eye, and none can get by His opened Heart. Yet it has never been His custom to intrude. He has never gone where He was not wanted; He has never forced Himself upon the attentions of any one. He waits for the invitation. Mary Magdalen did not wait for Jesus to go in search of her; she went to Him. Yes, and when it was a very difficult thing to do. She made a tremendous sacrifice in order to lay her heart bare before Him; she humiliated herself before curious spectators, and before the whole world. Still the story of that sacrifice is told! The ten lepers would have died in their wretchedness had they waited for Jesus to go in search of them. He passed within shouting distance; they had to do the rest. They raised their voices in a piercing cry: "Lord, make us clean!" Leprosy was associated with uncleanness of which any one might be ashamed. Had they hidden back of that shame and failed to cry out we would have no account of the cure of the ten lepers. It is well that we remember that those who were able to walk went in search of Christ, and invalids unable to make their own way were carried to Him.

We must, then, go in search of Him, explain our purpose and cry for His mercy. We must lay our hearts bare before Him and speak as they of old spoke: "Son of David have mercy on me; Lord,

that I may be made whole! See these hands of mine, Lord, they are knotted and calloused from work; and now I can work no longer. See these children of mine, Lord, I have no means of feeding and clothing them. Lord, see this problem; it has subdued me; all is confusion, and I know not which way to turn. Jesus, see this empty desolate heart, this broken spirit. Lord, all is darkness and I need some one to show me the way!"

### **Blessed Are They Who Trust in Him**

There are remarkable differences between those who Hope in God and those who rely only upon themselves. The latter lose their capital and they are overwhelmed with grief. They are unwilling to work, and ashamed to beg; they enter the long night with no daylight ahead. The suicide page tells an appalling tale. On the contrary, those who rely upon God may feel heart-broken over the loss of wealth, friends, health but the night before them is not an unending one. They see in the distance the first rays of the rising sun, and in patience wait for the day. These look beyond their own powers for a solution of the problems of humanity; they trust in God.

Hope sweetens the disposition; distrust embitters it. If pleasant living were the highest ambition of life the man who can believe, hope, and wait is the more blessed. In times of unusual distress he alone can wear a persevering smile.

But there is a real foundation for this trust

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even where worldly blessings are concerned. Listen to Christ, He speaks to you: "Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. . . . Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? . . . and for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they labor not neither do they spin. But I say to you not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. How much more are you, O ye of little faith! Be not solicitous therefore, . . . for your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things."

These words addressed to you are from Him who fed the multitudes on the hillside. They are the everlasting guarantee of His watchfulness over the poor and helpless ones of this earth.

Why then be alarmed over tomorrow and the next day? Not even Christ would advise you to ignore the future; yet while exercising prudence toward it the present day is the day of days. Too much concern over tomorrow and thereafter encourages greed and unscrupulous methods of accumulating wealth. It produces the oppressor, the despot, the miser.

Consider the miser, how he hoards the gain of his labor, and after living poorly himself leaves his fortune to be squandered by undeserving children and relatives. Consider also the person who is for-

ever concerned about his health; he takes all the joy out of living by constantly diagnosing his own ills, and telling others about them. He keeps himself in bad health by the very means employed to lengthen his life. These men and women are concerned with this world and its life, far more than with the comforts and riches of eternal life. They are solicitous about the things of this world, and spend their days as though they alone were masters of destiny. The Gospel Parable of the lilies of the field consists of so many idle words. They have no abiding belief in Christ's promise to watch over His own. They distrust God and hope only in themselves.

### **We Must Do Our Share**

It would be unfair and tempting of divine Providence to throw all the responsibility of supplying food, clothing and shelter upon God. Common sense demands a personal coöperation with Him. The saying: "God helps those who help themselves," contains more than a grain of truth. God does not throw bundles from heaven; He does not assume all the responsibility for your happiness in this life. Presuming that He does or should is to deprive man of his purpose. Laziness is so detested in heaven that it is reckoned one of the capital sins. In what way then does God provide for us? Remember the birds of the parable: "They neither sow nor do they reap nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feedeth

them." God has provided the food; the birds must search for it. He has provided it plentifully. So with us; He has blessed the world, and provided it with a wealth of choice blessings. We must hunt them out, and put them into useful form. "In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat bread." This means work, tireless application of our energies to duty; perseverance. God blesses the labor and makes it fruitful.

A farmer must break the soil, carefully sow the seed, and cultivate the growing plants in order to produce grain. If he should allow his fields to grow up in weeds, his grain to rot in his graneries, he will starve in the midst of plenty. He will perish through sloth. He must labor, and God will coöperate with him and bless his labor. A carpenter, a bricklayer, a typist, must be equally energetic; these have talents which must be used. To put the blame for poverty and all its ills upon God is to miss the point entirely. This implies a presumption that is entirely out of harmony with man's purpose on earth.

A misunderstanding of God's providence easily leads one away from Him. How often we hear it said: "Well, I cannot get what I want; things have gone so hard with me; I prayed for something and God would not grant it, so I have stopped praying altogether." And another will say: "I doubt the goodness of God, and question even His existence, because of my many troubles." But, is it God who has made troubles for you, or is it man?



Did He lay the heavy hand of poverty on you, or did man? Look back carefully and apportion the responsibility. Is it not possible that you must bear a part of the blame? Have you exercised all your talents according to your ability? God does not spend Himself going about society, inflicting this one with hardship, blessing that one with comforts. We have made our mistakes; we have squandered our talents; we have wasted ourselves in unprofitable channels. We look for some excuse for our failures, some one to blame. There has been too much presumption on God's providence.

Presuming upon God's mercy and despair of it are the extremes. Somewhere between these two a happy medium is to be found; that medium according to better authority than mine is: "work as though all things depended upon yourself, and hope in God as though all things depended upon Him."

### **The First Requisite for Divine Help**

Our Divine Master spoke words to this effect: "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be added unto you." In our distress we are looking for these things; cessation of grief, legitimate comforts, peace of mind, happiness. We certainly are justified in desiring these blessings, but we must not make them the one goal of our striving. We must remember that God put them in the last place, saying: "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven."

No real seeker after heaven, to my knowledge, has had to complain for lack of the "other things." Those seeking first the kingdom of heaven, have found this world, if anything, too fascinating, too rich in its offerings. Their battle has been against the good things of the world. Men trying to live poorly like Christ have found riches everywhere; going into the desert to live alone with God, they have found multitudes coming out to them; apparently wearing out their bodies in fasting and abstinence, they have lived unusually long lives. The real seekers after the kingdom of heaven have found these things in such abundance as to be distracted thereby. Trying to get away from the world, the world has pursued them relentlessly. Once we grasp this stubborn persistence of the world to overwhelm the seekers of the kingdom of heaven, we can grasp the more quickly Christ's words of advice to discouraged and oppressed people: "Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body what you shall put on . . . for after all these things do the heathens seek!"

### **Desserts for the Deserving**

Has it ever occurred to you that individuals who are most deserving of God's good things ask the least of Him? And that the least deserving expect the most of Him? Job was a worthy man, but his cry was: "The Lord hath given and the Lord hath taken away." He would not ask anything of the Lord. The Christ-like man or woman, in some

desperate situation, repeats: "If it be God's will; if it be God's will." Such a one has the greater right to the use of the blessings of this world, yet exercises caution in seeking such favors.

The unworthy ask the most and expect the most. It is not likely that they will weigh a proposition and say: If it be God's will. They are not concerned a great deal whether it is God's will or not. God must needs give to them generously, or they complain. Consider for a moment the number of persons who are stretching the laws of God to the breaking point, excusing themselves with: "We must do this because we are poor; I had to do that because I was out of work!" Yet, these very ones know that they need God's blessings in abundance, while doing everything possible to show their unworthiness. Instead of giving up all manner of wrong-doing in order to win Divine favor they do the things that are wrong to escape the hardships of a difficult situation. One says: "I turned to burglary to provide for my family." Another: "I have violated God's marriage laws because we were poor." Here are but two of many examples that might be given of persons who profess to be in great need of God's mercy, and yet do everything to cause Him to withhold it. They have little consideration for God, yet expect God to have great consideration for them. Their first love is given to the good things of the world. They love the gifts; they have only a secondary interest in the Giver of the gifts. The words of Christ:

“Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven,” they have ignored.

We poor mortals consider it folly to heap gifts upon the unworthy. We would soon withdraw our support from one who loved our gifts but despised and persecuted us. I should say: Oh! it is not worth while, I have done much for that man; money I gave him; valuable time instructing and advising him; I have done everything for him and he has yet to show me an act of appreciation! God is equally sensitive to our unworthiness. Why should He work miracles for those who return only offense?

### **Dangers in Worldly Blessings**

God in His infinite wisdom knows that earthly blessings are not always best for man. It would require more books than the world contains to record the stories of failure that have been charged against success. Only the recording angels could tabulate such statistics.

Individuals, nations, groups, have all suffered from prosperity. Even the indestructible Church has had its most trying days in times of greatest temporal wealth. She has been strongest in times of persecution and widespread depression. Nations have been weakest when outwardly they gave the impression of greatest strength. When ancient Rome ruled the world, and her eagle was the standard in every army of the world, she was then in the advanced stages of decay. When Spain ruled the

world in the early sixteenth century, she was weak and tottering at home.

Too many good things weaken character, and encourage a let down in discipline. Without a doubt we can trace many of our own ills to this human tendency. Surely we have been a people blessed with temporal goods. Our country has been in the estimation of the whole world, the land flowing with milk and honey. Even our poor people would be considered "well off" in other lands. We have never known real want. Our fertile and extensive farm lands have produced abundantly; our mineral supplies, timber, coal have made us an independent, a rich nation. Truly, there have been some destitute people in our midst all the time, but they were simply a shiftless lot in a land of opportunity. The nation has been rich with this world's goods.

As a consequence of this wealth we have surrendered ourselves to the comforts and ease that it produced; we have let down the bars of discipline; we have simply followed the multitude; we have been carried along by the current, almost to the extent of surrendering body and soul to the destroying germ of earthly success. Individuals surrendered their individuality; strong men surrendered their strength; virtuous men surrendered their virtue. Things have gone too nicely; no one had to worry. Finally, we reached the breaking point; conditions permitted much stretching of principles. The time came when principles could be stretched



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no further; their elasticity was gone. They broke, and mighty was the reaction. Everything seemed to go together and suddenly; a smiling happy land one day gave way on the next to sorrow and gloom. Success had failed!

### **A Blessing in Disguise**

This failure often witnessed in the history of nations is equally common to prosperous individuals. A person trained in childhood and youth to practice the principles of honesty, modesty, charity, is often strongly tempted to discard these virtues upon the acquisition of position, wealth, power. Trained to look to God for help and protection in this life, he will come to feel that he can protect himself without help from on high. Educated along the lines of strict justice, he will become an unscrupulous oppressor, once he reaches a position of authority. Encouraged to look upon poverty as Christ-like, he will despise his poorer brethren once money fills his coffers. Imbued with the Christian sense of modesty and charity, he will scorn these virtues as old-fashioned and out of date in a pleasure-seeking world. Money, praise, power, position; these are the successes of this world; but before God and before man worldly success is often the beginning of sorrow!

Is it not within the scope of God's providence to prevent such catastrophes? His designs are not according to the plans of man. He has planned a life for each of us that will eventually lead us to

Him. Unless we interfere with these plans He shall be life's crowning success. If we could once grasp the depth of His love, we could understand better why that love at times prompts Him to prevent our failure. He may see here a very worthy person, or a group of persons, or a whole nation headed toward the precipice through worldly success. Like a brave man saving a despairing soul from self-destruction, God will *offer* a way out. He will offer a helping hand. He may intrude Himself in time to prevent the calamity. His interference may itself take a severe form. But nothing short of severity would accomplish His purpose. A gentle hint would be lost.

Our world-wide depression is more than a hint; it is an affliction. But if it brings about a return to Christian principles in business, social and family life it will prove a blessing. Temporarily it seems to be a curse, but in reality the bitter medicine alone can prevent death. It may, therefore, be according to the will of a kindly Providence.

Individuals find too much prosperity a dangerous plaything. With them it is like a loaded weapon in the hands of a child. Shall we forbid God the right to take this dangerous thing away from us? Should a child complain and despise the father who snatches the loaded gun from his hand? Perhaps this is the answer to those who say they have prayed and prayed for some material thing without receiving an answer from heaven. Perhaps, that very thing would be to their detriment

in the final summing up of things. Perhaps this is the answer to the questions: why has this affliction come upon me? why this sickness? why this loss of property? position? It is possible that God has deprived you of some dangerous toy. Here and now you may not see the reason for divine interference, and you may in all honesty think that continued earthly success will do you no spiritual harm. But in spite of that honest conviction you are mistaken. We know that St. Paul prayed to the very last that God might not allow success to go to his head. He prayed that "having preached to others he might not become a castaway." And the Apostle gave some words of warning on the subject: "He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall."

It is true then to say that earthly goods, which after all belong to God, are oftentimes dangerous things in the hands of man. They mean earthly success, but too often spiritual failure. It is an act of mercy for God to withhold from us the things that lead to our ruin.

### **The Triumph of Failure**

Since we must view things in the light of eternity and not of the passing moment only, we can see the glory of failure. St. Thérèse of Lisieux failed as far as this world is concerned. She failed in life; it was wasted; she accomplished nothing, was frowned upon by her equals, died at an early

age by the slowly consuming but persistent germ of tuberculosis. But what a failure! Her name is written in the heavens; hers was a glorious life, even though the world could not see the glory of it.

The most spectacular of all failures in human history was that of the Son of God. He calmed the turbulent seas, but He did not silence the tumultuous multitude surging around the palace of Pontius Pilate; He raised the son of the weeping widow of Nāim, and called Lazarus from the tomb but surrendered His own life on the gibbet of the cross. It was His divinity that made a world tragedy of Calvary; it was His greatness that made the crucifixion so base and humiliating. No similar failure could happen on this earth unless God should come back to us and subject Himself to the whims and folly of man. But that was triumphant failure! It was by Calvary and the cross that He conquered; without the tomb there could have been no resurrection. His defeat was His victory; His failure was His glorious triumph! He had won the heart of mankind!

It is not necessary to go to the Gospels or even to the lives of the saints to find the triumph of failure. The Catholic Church when worshipping in the catacombs, and persecuted everywhere was a failure. But out of that failure came the Church's power among the nations. In the sixteenth century an impartial observer might have said that she had failed again, and this time more completely than ever before. But out of that fail-

ure came a vigorous life that had not been known since the missionary days of St. Paul.

When some time ago a Catholic with legitimate ambition dared reach for the highest honors in our land, he was defeated. It was a crushing defeat. But lovers of truth, honesty, tolerance and fair play have said that his failure was more honorable than his opponent's victory. That was a glorious defeat. It did more to bring narrowmindedness, intolerance and hate to the forefront than any other single event in our national history.

This strange paradox is not found only in great movements and with great figures, but is prominent in the life stories of the obscure. From the hidden places and from among the unknown come the world leaders. Poverty and simplicity have given the world its genius. In medicine, science, architecture, music, art, literature, the humble classes have carried off the honors. Progress is therefore one of the glories of the poor. Obscurity has been crowned with fame!

Granting, as we must, that the crown of eternal glory is the greatest success one can have, no one will ever know how many have won that reward through earthly failure. Some have been brought to a keen realization of God's eternal truths through sickness and disease. Physical health collapsed and out of the wreckage spiritual health revived. When the world ceased to give happiness, they looked in time to find the happiness of heaven. Others have pursued the long path of life in a sim-



plicity seldom disturbed by the thoughts of worldly greatness. The world declares that they have lived in vain; they have lived useless, wasted lives. But again, out of the waste they have raised up eternal dwelling places. Many have been brought to their senses by sudden financial losses. In their distress the world will offer nothing more than a passing word of sympathy; having failed they must step aside. But this failure may be the crowning success of life. Out of those commercial ruins thrones may be erected before the angels and God.

### **God Chastiseth Whom He Loveth**

Every pain, every deprivation, every want, is filled with bitterness. But it is not God's will that anyone should find a primrose path to heaven. No such road to heaven has ever been constructed; the Lord Himself tells us that the path is narrow and strait. He also says that to be His disciple one must take up his cross daily. To certain classes who comprised the "big ones" of the earth Christ said: "You have received your reward."

It is true that the more one relinquishes in this life for the love of God, the more he will possess in the life to come. Poverty, hardship and pain are the world's instruments for making heaven's joys. God does not spare those who want these joys in their fullness. He loves such souls who must in turn prove their love. No saint listed in the Church's calendar for the admiration and

imitation of the faithful has lived in the abundance of this world's goods. Man does not prove his love for God in the midst of plenty; but rather by his faithfulness when life is empty and the world dreary. "The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away, but blessed be the name of the Lord" is the prayer of His chosen ones. He allows them to perfect themselves in the crucible of self-denial. The sinner reclining in the warm sunlight of plenty can bless God; but it requires the saint to raise his voice to bless God from the shadows. God has given to His favorite ones the opportunity of reaching Heaven's highest places; He has done this by sending them more crosses that ordinary life imposes. He has permitted some actually to experience the pain and the shame of Calvary. St. Francis of Assisi was blessed by bearing on his body the stigmata of Christ's passion.

### **God Chastiseth His Enemies**

We have read from the Scriptures of the fall of Lucifer; of the tower of Babel; of the penances of Nineveh; of Tyre and Sidon. There are no boundaries to God's mercy except it come into conflict with His justice. But when His justice exhausts His patience He manifests His displeasure before men. There is no valid argument against such a visitation now.

For a good many years man has been in the process of building another tower of Babel; he has gone about as far in trying to become like God as

the once beautiful Lucifer; he has grown accustomed to the habits of Tyre and Sidon. Perhaps these moderns could teach the ancients lessons in self-assertion. Has God's patience been exhausted again? If so we are due for a severe lesson. Since man has persisted in boasting that he can run the world a little better than God, perhaps God has accepted the challenge, and this world-wide collapse is simply the falling of the tower of Babel. Since the Almighty may employ any method that appeals to His divine Mind for humiliating His enemies, perhaps, this time He will not send fire and brimstone from the heavens, but will let men fall in the tangled mess which they themselves have produced.

### **He Has Not Deserted the Worthy**

Even though God may be standing by watching the great of the earth fall into their own snare, He has not forgotten the little ones. They may feel neglected and even deserted, but their plight is not half so intolerable as that of the "great ones" who still make an outward show but inwardly are filled with grief and disillusion. God is near His own and knows them. He grieves that they must suffer with the unworthy. He is waiting nearby to cheer them and to bring peace into their households. He is waiting for the day when He can call His own from this vale of tears to that land where He "shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Apoc. vii. 17).

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