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## "MAN PROPOSES – GOD DISPOSES"

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"The world by wisdom knows not God." "Going about to establish a righteousness of their own they have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." – 1 Cor. 1:21; Rom. 10:3.

MEN of energy and ambition are, more frequently than others, used of the Lord; because they are instruments ready for service. If the energy and ambition be thoroughly subjected to the Lord – controlled by high spirituality, humility and veneration toward the Creator, and with large individuality and independence of character and firmness toward men – it will lead to reverent and careful study of the Divine will and to persistence and assiduity in its prosecution. Such characters God is pleased to use for the great things of His service. Next to our Lord Jesus, the Apostle Paul is an ideal illustration of such a character: God was pleased to use him largely as a mouth-piece and as a servant of the Truth – in proportion to his humility, loyalty and energy.

And likewise, but in an opposite direction, God has been pleased to use the energetic and ambitious among the worldly – whose motive power was not love, loyalty and humility, but to the contrary – selfish pride, vainglory. God often uses such characters in another kind of service – causing their ambitious energies ("wrath") to praise Him, and the remainder (beyond what suits His purposes) He restrains. Illustrations of this stamp of character are seen in Satan, in Judas, and in persons in less prominent positions in the Church – even today. These are active in planting "roots of bitterness, by which many are defiled" and sifted out, stumbled – leaving the remainder stronger and purer. See the inspired Word on this subject – "I hear that there be divisions among you; and as to a certain part I believe it; and there must needs be also partyism among you [permitted of the Lord], *that they that are approved*

*may be made manifest* among you." "Brethren, mark them which *cause divisions* and offenses, in violation of the doctrine which ye have learned [the royal law of Love]; and avoid them." "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out *that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*" (1 Cor. 11:18; Rom. 16:17; 1 John 2:19.) It is doubtless as necessary that the Church be sifted, purged, tested, as that it be "built up"; and for either work God uses the ready and willing.

But our thoughts run specially in the channel of God's supervision of earthly affairs and His use of worldly ambitions in world-affairs. In this direction Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Alexander and Napoleon I. are notable examples of the past – men of destiny, over whose affairs Providence had a supervision. God utilized the energies and ambitions of these men in the forwarding of His plans and in the fulfilment of His predictions – and their further ambitious efforts He restrained by His superior power, as it pleased Him. Our thoughts pursue this course, because we perceive such a worldly ambition to do something notable, to achieve a world-wide fame, possessing a man of opportunity today – the German Emperor; and we regard him as likely to be to some extent another "man of destiny."

## **EMPEROR WILLIAM'S AMBITION**

As Lord Herschel was guided by his science to search for a new planet and thus discovered one, some students of the greatest of all sciences – the Divine Revelation, the Bible – are guided thereby to search for its promised "things to come" (John 16:13), and, as was promised, they find them and thus are permitted to anticipate history. For instance, the "Watchers" know, from the unfolding of the Scriptures which God has provided them, that astounding changes, social, religious, and political, are just before us – to be accomplished within the next sixteen years: we note the

Scripture testimony that just prior to the great collapse in anarchy there is to be a revival of Papal influence in the world; and that Protestantism, considerably unified or federated, will be in practical sympathy and co-operation with Papacy; and that in fact (though not in theory) Catholicism and Protestantism will for a short time jointly rule the civilized world (through the civil powers) and appear to have begun a *human* Millennium. But while the cries of Peace! Peace!! are still heard, will come the great cataclysm of social revolution which shall demolish all present institutions and demonstrate the futility of all selfish human schemes, and by heart-breaking discouragements prepare mankind for the great blessing which God has in store.

Naturally, the "Watchers" are on the lookout for every sign of the times seeming to harmonize with the known coming events. Indeed, our interest in the "news of the day" is chiefly with the fragments, which seem to have a connection with or a bearing upon the fulfilments of prophecy. And knowing that God generally uses "a man of opportunity" for His work, we are struck with the fact that the German Emperor, who evidently is seeking a notable destiny, has lately been giving expression to ambitions that seem closely related to Scriptural predictions. And his determination and pride will impel him so far as possible to make good his boasts; added to which he freely and repeatedly declares that he feels himself led and impelled in this direction by an unseen power, or "voice," which spurs him on to success. And a success on one point or issue would surely lead such a man to larger schemes in the same direction. God "raised him up" to the throne of the German Empire (in probably the same way that He raised Pharaoh up to the throne of Egypt at the time of Israel's deliverance) by taking out of the way, by death, his father – a man of very different temperament and ambitions. What would be more reasonable than to suppose of William II. that (as it is written of one brought miraculously to the throne of old) God brought him "to the throne, *for such a time as this,*" and for the work he is ambitious to accomplish?

The Emperor's ambition is to restore to "religion" some of its former power by which it co-operated with the civil rulers in the control of the world. Not that he would desire to reproduce "the dark ages" of priestcraft and superstition, and of inquisition, the stake and the rack; but that he considers those evils, not in the light of the Scriptures, but in the light of today's world-wisdom, attributing those evils to the ignorance of the times and not to the false teachings of Anti-Christ.

He reasons that Romanism is rejuvenating and adapting itself to twentieth century conditions and can be trusted as much as Protestantism, so far as the maintenance of present governments is concerned; and that, after all, is to him the all-important matter. Indeed, he seems to feel that the revival of Papal influence is a necessity anyway on the ground that of two evils the less should be chosen to avert the greater.

From the Emperor's own statement of his ambitious designs (published in the public prints) as related to General Hoffmann Scholz, and doubtless designed [R5527 : page 262] for publication, we furnish the following extract:

"At the present day two great evils threaten humanity. They are Socialism and Atheism. Against each of these the pope is a bulwark. In fighting infidelity no aid should be neglected. Socialism is infidelity to the monarch or the State, and Atheism is infidelity to God.

"The Pope is the spiritual ruler of the largest communion on earth, and he is by far the most powerful and authoritative of spiritual rulers. His word is promptly and willingly obeyed by hundreds of millions of people spread throughout the globe. He can order and direct the consciences of these multitudes. He can say: These are your religious tenets; those must be your social sentiments; and suddenly he is obeyed. His power therefore for good is immeasurable.

"Kings and emperors are the Divinely ordained guardians of social order and directors of social well-being, just as the leaders of religious bodies are the Divinely ordained moderators of conscience. But just as kings and emperors can have their beneficent influence in the religious order, so can spiritual guides help and promote the social weal.

"The pope's range of power is the vastest of all, and consequently the possibilities of the good he may do are the most far-reaching. I think it imperative *therefore* that he be put in a position to freely accomplish all the good of which he is capable. He must be liberated from his self-imposed imprisonment in the Vatican. All the trammels that surround and harass him in his daily life must be removed, so that he will then be at liberty to fight the common enemies, Socialism and irreligion. And he will be in a position to make his voice heard in the interests of peace, when nations go to war without just motive, and in the interest of humanity, when acts of cruelty or injustice are being anywhere committed.

"I have meditated long and deeply on this subject. The fact that it preoccupies me so much convinces me that *I am inspired to take action in the matter*. It is like one of the voices that Socrates had about with him which whispers in my ear that this also is my mission to remedy the pope's position and open up the field for his range of well-doing. It daily urges me to act. Whether I shall succeed or not is beyond my power to foretell. Judging from the circumstances there is every evidence that success should not be outside the bounds of possibility. I am going to do my utmost, and more than this no man can do.

"I feel for the moment that I have no other concrete and practical mission before me. To succeed in such an undertaking would be a climax and a crowning worthy of any man's life. As I say, I will energetically attempt it. The small *preternatural*

*voice* unmistakably spurs me on, and I think than this no better augury of success could be desired.

"For this moment I can say no more, and it does not behoove me to be too explicit about my plans. They are already laid, and my immediate actions will be a development of them. Their result will be their justification, and it will also be the justification of many acts in the past, which may have seemed strange and unaccountable to my good Protestant subjects, but which had their motive and their origin in a desire to accomplish great and enduring events....

"I shall not die until my ends in this regard are attained. Death otherwise would find a void in my existence; and *I feel within me* that I have not been born in vain."

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