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Why Does an All-Powerful God Permit Aggression Amongst the Nations?

It may seem unnecessary to most of us to even question the power and ability of the Almighty God to regulate all things throughout His universe in accord with His good will. However, we have met people who have asked, If God is really all-powerful, and loving, why does He permit aggression by the strong whether it be nations or individuals, with the resulting suffering and distress on the part of the weaker and often innocent of mankind ?

This is an honest and reasonable question, and we believe that it is fully answered in the Bible in a manner that should be satisfactory to all right thinking individuals, even if they are not yet Christians. Noting some Scriptures with reference to the Lord Himself, we read in Gen. 17:1—"The Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." Through the prophet Isaiah, we also read of the greatness of the Lord in comparison with the nations of this world in Isa. 40:12-28. To visualize a God who was the Creator not only of our planet, but of all the planets in the whole universe--"that bringeth out their host by number"—really passes our comprehension of His might and power. But it does help us to understand the truth of the same prophet, speaking again for the Lord in Isa. 46:9-11.—"For I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me . . . My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure . . . Yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it."

Someone may say, Yes, we admit the great power of God to accomplish just what He wills on any matter, but why does He allow such unjust and unequal things throughout the lengths and breadths of this earth ? The partial answer to this question is found in the words of Gen. 1:26, with reference to the creation of our first parent.—"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." To be created "in the image or likeness of God," meant that Adam must have a freewill; that is, to be able to make an intellectual choice respecting all of life's affairs. God had instructed Adam what was expected of him in the way of obedience, and he, knowing the love that his Creator had for him, was expected to obey, not because of any pressure brought to bear, but from his own choice—in the exercise of his free-will.

The angels in heaven were no doubt controlled by the same principles—they also having free-wills were required to obey God, not of compulsion, but out of love for their Creator also. This gave the opportunity for Satan to rebel against God, and we know he also engineered the disobedience of Adam, our first parent, who gave way to the subtle deception. The outcome was, as we well know, that Adam must

experience the penalty of death, which would never have been experienced had he resisted the Adversary and remained faithful to his loving Creator. Condemned to death himself, all of Adam's children were born into a dying existence, as we read from the Apostle in Rom. 5:12— "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

However, what about the spirit of aggression which was manifest in the human family even in Adam's day; indeed, the first child of Adam and Eve developed the aggressive spirit so strongly that he killed his brother, Abel. This influence also came from the great Adversary, whom our Lord said, "was a murderer from the beginning."—John 8:44. See also 1 John 3:12.

We may think, and question, Why did not God, the all-powerful Creator, intervene in the day of Cain and Abel and nip that spirit of aggression in the bud, before it blossomed forth into the lives of hundreds, thousands and millions of the human family as it has today ? Apparently, God saw it was wiser not to interfere with His original Plan—that all mankind must experience the sad and disastrous result of disobedience—so that when the opportunity comes to be delivered from the fall into sin, the majority, at least, will accept that deliverance, not wishing to continue eating the sour grape, which has set so many teeth on edge. One great lesson that the Lord wishes all mankind to learn is that expressed in Prov. 13:15 —"The way of the transgressors is hard."

Further, in addition to the lasting lesson of the sinfulness of sin being impressed upon the whole human family, God has been proving the faithfulness of two classes of people, over hundreds of years, by the permission of evil, including aggression by a section of mankind.

We think, first of all, of that noble band of patriarchs and prophets from the days of Abel right down to John the Baptist, many of whom are described by Paul in Heb. 11. In verse 38 the apostle declared—"Of whom the world was not worthy." How true ! These faithful Ancient Worthies suffered aggression of a most violent type, and endured "as seeing him who is invisible," being proved worthy to obtain "a better resurrection" in the earthly kingdom. Without the permission of evil, and the aggression displayed against them, they could not have manifest their supreme love and devotion to the Lord and His cause. They shall be compensated, and no doubt counted the Lord's cause well worth suffering for, as they exhibited that overcoming faith in God and His promises for the future.

Of our Lord at His first advent it was prophesied in the Psalms and quoted by Paul in Romans 15:3— "The reproaches of them that reproached thee (Jehovah) fell on me." In Old Testament times the reproaches of them that reproached Jehovah were experienced by all the faithful ones of the class of Ancient Worthies, as we have seen, but Christ experienced the greatest reproaches of all, the greatest aggression of all time. Why did the Father permit these acts of aggression upon Christ ? We have the answer in Hebrews 5:8, 9—"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience (proved His obedience) by the things which he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." We read further of our Lord—"Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand. of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself." (Heb. 12:2, 3.)

As with Christ, so with His followers, the experiences through which they pass demonstrate their worthiness of a place in the kingdom with the Lord.' Paul's words to Timothy, respecting his own position and that of all faithful followers of the Master, are most explanatory in 2 Tim. 3:10-12—"But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions . . . what persecutions I endured; but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Again, we have the exhortation from the Apostle—"We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:22.)

In the opening verses of Revelation 17 we have a most remarkable prophecy respecting the judgment of a great system, pictured by an unchaste woman, and we quote in part—"The inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication . . . And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.

And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her, I wondered with great astonishment." (Rev. 17:2, 4-6.) What aggression, what persecution is revealed in the words of this prophecy, and which was poured out upon God's people throughout the centuries of the Dark Ages by the Papal system—and that in the name of the Lord ! It has been estimated that at least 50 millions of people were persecuted unto death by the Papacy over the centuries of this Gospel Age, and as we write we hear of thousands bowing down to the body of the recently deceased Pope, the head of the system which claims that it never alters. Which means, that if it had the power today, it would continue to slaughter those who dared to think for themselves and serve the true God in spirit and in truth.

No wonder we read of the destruction of this great system of iniquity in Revelation 18. We quote again—"All nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her." (Verse 3.) We hear in the news at this very time that kings and queens, i..residents and prime ministers the world over have been lamenting and praising the man who represented this system which is an abomination in the sight of the Lord. We can well understand the further exhortation—"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." (Verses 4, 5.) While these words in Revelation describe the Mother system of iniquity, we know that the "Daughter" systems partake largely of the spirit and teachings of the Mother—along the line of immortality of the soul, hell fire, trinity, etc. So, the term "Babylon" includes all church systems which teach these God-dishonoring theories, and the call goes out to all who have ears to hear—"Come out of her, my people."

The further verses in Revelation 18 describe the lamentations at the destruction of Babylon—"Alas, alas, that great city Babylon; for in one hour is thy judgment come." Then the message is addressed to God's faithful saints who would then be with Him in glory—"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all . . . And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." (Verses 10, 20, 21, 24.)

In Revelation 19:3 we read in this same connection—"And her smoke rose up for ever and ever." Yes, "her smoke"—the remembrance of such a system of iniquity, Satan's masterpiece, will last in the minds of all people, so that they will never desire again, nor subscribe to such an abomination of desolation. It is estimated at the present time that 450 millions of people are deceived in the Mother system of Papacy alone, apart from those also in the Daughter systems, but all these shall be liberated at the destruction of Babylon, as well as all the millions that will be awakened in the resurrection, at which time we read respecting the saints in glory—"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." (Rev. 3:9.) See also 2 Thes. 2:7-12 with reference to this "mystery of iniquity."

Again, it may be asked, Why did the all-powerful God permit such an aggressive, devastating system to deceive all nations ? One of the main reasons seems well presented in the words of Revelation 20:4—"I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which

had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” These overcoming saints had not worshipped the beast—the beastly Papal system. Neither his image—any similar system, ancient or modern. Neither had received his mark upon their foreheads—did not intellectually yield to the great deception which ensnared the majority of mankind. Or in their hands—did not work for, or further the interest of such a system of iniquity. No, these faithful ones were gladly “beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God,” and the aggression and persecutions against them have but demonstrated their loyalty, and sifted out all those who were not fully consecrated to the Lord and worthy to endure and suffer for His sake.

Coming down the stream of time to our own century, we think of other great aggressions, such as the First World War, and, the devastations inflicted upon many nations, and especially upon innocent women and children. During that war, a Peace Mission was organized in America, led by a Mr. Wilson; an ocean liner was chartered with the peace delegation on board to sail for Europe to try and bring peace to the warring nations. A noble effort indeed ! Reading an account of the voyage, it was reported that during the deliberations in preparation for the peace mission, disputes broke out amongst the delegation—amongst themselves, before they reached the war area. Why ? it may be asked!

The Apostle Paul’s reference to the former lives of the Ephesian Christians is very explanatory—”In time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” Yes, the Adversary would seek to disrupt any good movement, and accomplishes much along this line in all except those truly controlled by the Lord’s spirit.

It may ‘be asked, But what good was accomplished by God permitting that First World War ? Answer, many of God’s people were further developed for the heavenly kingdom; millions of people gained lessons in the sinfulness of sin that will be to their everlasting gain in the kingdom to come, and Jerusalem was liberated from the Turks, in preparation for the further progress over the 40 years since.

What of the Second World War and the aggression of that time in various countries ? Out of that again, further millions of lessons have been gained by the inhabitants of the world; further developing of the members of the Church on earth, and the driving of the Jews back to Palestine. Read Jer. 16:14-17—”The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them . . . Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the Lord, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain (kingdom).” Harsh methods some may think ! Yes, perhaps so, but the Lord knows best what to permit, and what to restrain.—”Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.” (Psa. 76:10,)

What of our own days, and the aggressions which continue in various lands of the world ? We think of the aggression in Hungary by Communist domination. Aggression in the Middle East, and now again in the Far East. Newspaper reports have stated that up to 67,000 shells have been fired from Red China to Quemoy Island in a day ! And this is Chinese against Chinese—their own countrymen and women. Truly man’s inhumanity to man knows no bounds in this 20th century civilization. And God, the all-powerful God allows mankind to be subjected to their own inhumanity. Why ? Because He wishes to impart the greatest lesson of all time in the ending of this “present evil world.” In Psalm 46 we read—”The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved; he uttered his voice, the earth (earthly society) melted. Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.” The prophet refers to the Lord making the desolations because it will be by His permission, and what He requires in His Plan. Then will follow—”He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.” (Psa. 46:6, 8-10.) The Lord will surely call a halt to all aggression

of all kinds when sufficient lessons have been learned of the sinfulness of sin.

While the disturbances of earth continue, the Lord's people are to progress with their own preparation of heart and mind for the heavenly kingdom, as shown in 2 Cor. 10:3-6. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." And then follows one of the Apostle's most revealing statements concerning God's plan—"and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your (the church's) obedience is fulfilled."

What a wonderful solution to all earth's aggressions—the Lord will revenge all disobedience when the Church has fulfilled her obedience, her sacrifice in the steps of Christ. How fitting, then, are Paul's words—"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not. Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer." (Rom. 12:19, 18, 12.)

Melbourne Christmas Convention.

The brethren of the Melbourne Class wish to announce that their Annual Convention will be held this year (D.V.) on December 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th in the Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond, and all friends able to attend these gatherings are cordially invited to make their arrangement accordingly. Further information from the Class Secretary—Mr. J. B. Hiam, 16 Kennedy Street, South Oakleigh, S.E.13, Victoria.

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A cross (x) on the wrapper indicates that the subscription to "Peoples Paper" is overdue.

Heavens Rolling Together.

THE recent death of the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church has revealed a situation amongst the so-called Protestant Churches which has not been so apparent previously. A news item in the Melbourne "Age" of the 13th October last, is presented in explanation:—

"The congregation at Wesley Church P.S.A., at Dr. Irving Benson's invitation, stood in silence as a tribute to 'a simple, humble, kindly, greatly gifted man who had gone to his reward.' At Scots Church Rev. A. Crichton Barr offered a prayer of thanksgiving for the life of a good man. Rev. Lyall Dixon at Independent Church said 'We share the loss occasioned by the death of the Pope, and sympathise with the members and friends of that church.' "

For the leader of any Protestant Church to declare that the head of the Roman Catholic Church had gone to his reward after serving for about twenty years as director of the great anti-christian Papal system is almost unbelievable. Surely the three church leaders quoted above have read a little of church history, and should know that during the Dark Ages the Papacy persecuted and slaughtered millions of innocent people in the name a Christ. They should know also that not many years ago the claim was made that the 'Roman Catholic Church never alters, and inasmuch as the recently deceased Pope accepted his office on the assumption that his predecessors had acted rightly, then he must have condoned their conduct, and, if he had the power, may also have continued their devastating reign of terror, and that, in the Lord's name.

When Napoleon took the Pope of his day prisoner and broke his power, by the Lord's overruling, that marked the beginning of the end of the greatest anti-christian system the world has known and now in our day we see further amazing evidence of the consuming going on in preparation for the complete destruction of the "mystery of iniquity" which has deceived all nations. In Rev. 6:14 we read —"And the heaven (ecclesiastical systems) departed as a scroll when it is rolled together." How appropriate the expression—"rolled together as a scroll" — showing that the Mother and Daughter systems will combine, making up Great Babylon, which is shortly to be overthrown like a "great millstone cast into the sea." (Rev. 18.)

The recently deceased Pope, along with all mankind, Roman Catholic and otherwise, will no doubt come up in the resurrection day, to unlearn the grossest of errors, if they will, and learn and obey the laws of Christ's kingdom, if they are to prove worthy of everlasting life on the restored earth. (Acts 3:20-23.)

Retrospection.

(Convention Address)

“Call to remembrance the former days.” (Heb. 10:32.)

THERE is a decided advantage in looking back on things past—calling to mind past experiences, lessons, instructions and knowledge, mistakes, failures or successes learnt in former days, not only in our • natural life, but especially in our spiritual life and character development, noting how our fellowship with the Lord has increased and become more intimate.

Calling to mind our endeavors to obey the instructions of the Scriptures and overcoming our own selfish will and conduct is cause for joy and thanksgiving to our Creator. This joy springs from the fact that the Lord has supplied the necessary help, strength and guidance with corrections and instructions. Looking back over the years we cannot come to any other conclusion than that it is a definite spiritual experience—it is a real thing.

Apart from the Lord and a knowledge of the Scriptures we could not have brought about this change. Although the beginning of this schooling was perhaps feeble and faulty on our part, yet, as we look back, there definitely has been progress.

It is interesting to note in the Scriptures that Israel was so often urged to call to mind their former days and experiences, especially in their deliverance from Pharaoh and the Egyptian bondage.—“Remember this day, in which ye came out of Egypt ... by the strength of the hand of the Lord.” “Remember, and do all the commandments, and be holy unto your God.” (Exod. 13:3; Num. 15:40) Often, they were urged to “Remember, and forget not how thou provokest thy Lord in the wilderness.” (Dent. 8:2.) Forgetting this, so often brought them calamities, punishments and national disasters.

We too, are likewise warned—“If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” (Heb. 10:38.) We, who have confessed Christ and His truth, are also included in that message to the Church of Sardis—“Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I shall come upon thee.” (Rev. 3:3.)

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews urges his readers to “Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated (enlightened), ye endured a great fight of afflictions.” Calling to mind days, now past, when we were first enlightened surely does encourage and stimulate the consecrated followers of the Lord, causing them to rejoice in His providences and guidance as they observe the manifestations of His love, mercy and power overshadowing them.

On reflection, as we take a mental picture of the past experiences and blessings of the truth, especially “present truth”, the question presents itself to our mind—What would our life, our circumstances, hopes, aims, our going out and coming in, have been, if the heart-cheering, sanctifying and joyful message of Present Truth had not been shown to us ? How it has changed our lives, our former conduct, and choice of friends and fellowship, and given new experiences. As the writer of Hebrews says—Ye became the companions of them that are persecuted and esteemed as foolish by the worldly wise.

Once we were dead in trespasses and sins. “For the time past of our lives may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles.” (1 Pet. 4:3.) After referring to the evil works of the flesh, the Apostle Paul says—“And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God.” (1 Cor. 6:11.)

Calling to mind those former days, as the Apostle reminds some who were now consecrated to the Lord, was not with the purpose of shaming them, but to remind them of their present privileges; favors and blessings of our merciful Lord, so that joy and love may abound in their hearts one for another, and call forth from them genuine gratitude and praise to the Lord for His goodness which led them to repentance. He does not now refer to them as miserable sinners under condemnation, but “If any one be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2 Cor. 5:17.)

To another group of Christians Paul writes — “When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness (ye freely followed your selfish inclinations). What fruit had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed ? For the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” (Rom. 6:20-22.)

Calling to mind some things in which we once lived and moved may not be good, and it is proper to forget some things in ourselves and in other fellow Christians. We note the Apostle Paul had put the question—“What fruit had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed ?” Nevertheless, seeing our past conduct in this light, we, by the Lord’s illuminating spirit, have turned about, and what a change this has been; no other power could do this—we are convinced this is of the Lord.

O! blessed they, and greatly blest,
Where Christ is ruler and confessed!
O happy hearts and happy homes,
To whom this King of triumph comes!

This position which we now occupy before God has been entered into by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the spirit of our God. So great is this change, that the Scriptures declare—“Henceforth know we no man after the flesh . . . If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you.” (2 Cor. 5:16, 17; Rom. 8:9.) Christianity is much more than living a good, moral life. In God’s viewpoint and estimation we are not now regarded as sinners, but as spirit-begotten sons—“I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” (2 Cor. 6:18.) While the Apostle Paul does refer to himself as the chief of sinners in 1 Tim. 1:15, 16, he did not, refer to himself as such after he had been chosen as an apostle of Christ, but he confesses that this was his condition before he found Christ as a Saviour—before he was enlightened. As he had received Christ, so also he walked in His steps, and was “not disobedient to the heavenly vision,” but grateful indeed for the favor that justified without merit on his part, and for the truth which sanctifies.

So, in like manner, we should appreciate the favors and gifts bestowed upon us by Christ without merit on our part. Truly, we can all testify that He guided our steps where we could not see, by ways that we had not known, these many years. And what lessons they unfold — what watchfulness, love, patience and tenderness, longsuffering instructions and experiences, corrections with Fatherly love and wisdom, all given so freely these many years. We feel so unworthy of them, and those who have been forgiven the most love Him the most.

We cannot deny that we have had these blessings and experiences, for we now know for a certainty that His precious truths and promises have come to us through our Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot help but sing-

O! come, my Sovereign, enter in;
Yet more Thy nobler life begin;
Thy Word and spirit guide us on,
Until the glorious crown be won!

When we make a comparison of what we might have been without the favor and spirit of the Lord, it is not very happifying as we look back over these many years. How much of the selfishness, vanity, pride, malice, anger, envy, covetousness and other works of the flesh dominated us ? And these works would have increased within us, resulting in unhappiness to ourselves and to others about us if we had not known the wonders of the Scriptures. It is therefore, not presumption to claim the blessedness of the truth, its wonders, its promises, its uplifting, transforming powers, guaranteed to us by the Highest and Holiest personality in the universe. The message in 2 Thes. 2:13, 14 applies to us also.—"God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth. Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

No, it is not presumptuous for us to claim, and for all the consecrated all over the world to claim that we now stand on higher ground—truly by faith already "seated with Christ in the heavenlies." In Eph. 2:4-6 are words of authority on this matter which are applicable only to consecrated Christians. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved ;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

The context from which our text is taken refers to the same blessed fact and experience. "Call to remembrance (how) you took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing ("for" margin) yourselves that ye have ("in heaven" omitted by Diaglott and R.S.V) a better and enduring substance (or possession)." Therefore, when you are tossed upon life's billows, when you are discouraged thinking all is lost, or when you look at others with their lands and gold; think—"call to mind"—that Christ has promised you His wealth untold; count and think upon your many blessings wealth can never buy.

Call to mind the consummation of your trial day, when the shadows lengthen and evening comes; our earthly tabernacle (tent) is about to be taken down; then, call to remembrance your promised reward in heaven and your home on high. Foolish we would be after these many years to have endured a great conflict and many sufferings and trials, to throw away our confidence in the hope, now so near, set before us. No, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which has a great reward." (Heb. 10:35.) Yes, this is sure to all who fight the good fight of faith.

However, we all still have need of patience, for the Christian's life consists of doing the Lord's will every day, "and having so done" the Apostle says, verse 36, "ye shall receive the promise." The Lord promised—"For I am going to make ready a place for you, and I will return and take you to be with me, that where I am you also may be." (John 14:2, 3, Weymouth.)

The apostle urges the consecrated in Heb. 10:37 to be patient in their trials and sufferings, for in comparison with the eternal fellowship with the Lord these were for a little while only, and "He that cometh will come, and will not tarry."

As we look over 'these many years, the espoused virgin church has waited long for her beloved Lord and Bridegroom. Even to the longing, beloved John, at the beginning of the Gospel Age, the Lord gave a final assurance— "Surely I come quickly." This is His last message to the Church. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," was John's response and every Christian's response these many years. (Rev. 22:20).

It is therefore most fitting for us to call to remembrance the former days (years) in which we were illuminated concerning the message of Present Truth, which is light for the last days, for there may be a tendency to now follow up merely a devotional life, placing doctrines of Present Truth secondary because these have to be contended for. Are we not favored to be living now--enlightened with the knowledge of the Lord's presence, and what is involved in these days of the Son of Man, and the gathering of His virgin

Church unto Himself, also the nearness of the blessing of all the families of the earth. Perhaps the delay or full accomplishment of these things for which the Church is waiting has been trialsome to many.

Although we see the signs and preparations for these things everywhere, yet the giant powers of evil are still very formidable and feverishly scheming how to avoid a total collapse of the present evil world. Nevertheless, the message still comes to the consecrated Christian—"Yet a little while"—and all things written by the prophets shall be accomplished, for there is no tarrying as far as the Lord is concerned, for we are surely living in the "days of the Son of Man"—His second presence. It is now true concerning the signs of His presence, that "when ye see these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your deliverance draweth nigh."

After these many, many years these things are beginning to come to pass as predicted. Surely, then, let us press on in watchfulness and prayer, with joy and zeal, for it is also true that we are living in very perilous times; that is, spiritual peril, with foes on every hand to draw us away from the prize. The powers of darkness will not retreat without a great conflict, and with cunning craftiness seek to becloud the issues involved and to belittle Present Truth and its importance.

Call to mind what has happened in the religious and secular world since we were first enlightened; hasn't there been a change since then? Yes, indeed. Perhaps some can look back 40 or 50 years since they first believed the truth; their

salvation now is nearer, and most of us would say that all the wonderful signs of our times add up to the conclusion that at long last the end of the age, the end of the reign of evil, is in sight,—the celestial city is in view. The reign of righteousness and truth will soon be inaugurated.

If the many years from the first advent of Christ to His second advent is compared to a little while, in Scripture, then, surely, the present period of waiting for the full accomplishment can be compared only to a moment—a moment and all things concerning our good hope shall be fulfilled completely. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." (2 Cor. 4:17; Rom. 13:12.)

"Hymns of Dawn Music Book."—Containing the original 333 hymns, 27 additional in an Appendix, well bound in strong cloth. with silver lettering, this new edition is priced at 10/- post paid.

Greeting Cards.

One of our brethren in the printing trade has kindly produced some Greeting Cards and sent them along with the request that the proceeds from the sale of them be donated to the General Tract Fund to assist in the work of the Institute. This is very much appreciated, in the service of the Lord.

These cards are quite nice and are suitable for general greetings, but they are not Christmas Cards. 'The price is. 3/- per dozen, post paid; orders may be placed by quoting numbers, as follows

1. "Just for To-day,"
2. "One Here and There,"
3. "How Readest Thou?,"
4. "The New Leaf,"
5. "The Best of Wishes—Faith—Hope—Love,"
6. "Drop a Pebble in the Water,"
7. "My Bible and I,"
8. "Love's Victory,"
9. "The Touch of the Master's Hand,"
10. "Some Worthy Attainments,"
11. "Come Unto Me,"
12. "Somewhere the Light is Shining,"
13. "The Secret of His Presence,"
14. "Watching and Praying,"
15. "Thus May He Bless and Keep Thee,"
16. "Not Seeing, Yet Believing,"
17. "Hitherto and Henceforth,"
18. "The Lord My Shepherd,"
19. "Into His Marvellous Light,"
20. "Right was The Pathway,"
21. "This is My Will for Thee.-
22. "Are Ye Able ?"

Tracts Available.

The article—"Is There a Connection Between Present World Troubles and Christ's Return ?" which appeared in last month's "Peoples Paper" will be available shortly in tract form. Friends who can use these to good advantage are invited to procure these tracts which are supplied free from the Tract Fund. Various other tracts also available.

A very good Oxford Bible, with References, India paper, thumb index, Brevier clear type, Persian Morocca binding, is now available at 60/-. Same Bible with Concordance and Subject Index at 70/-.

Revised Standard Version.—A new edition of this, Bible is now available in strong cloth binding at 19/9., plus 1/3 postage.

BOOKS WANTED.

Friends who may have the 7 volumes of "Reprints" for sale are asked to communicate with this office, advis'ng the price expected.

