

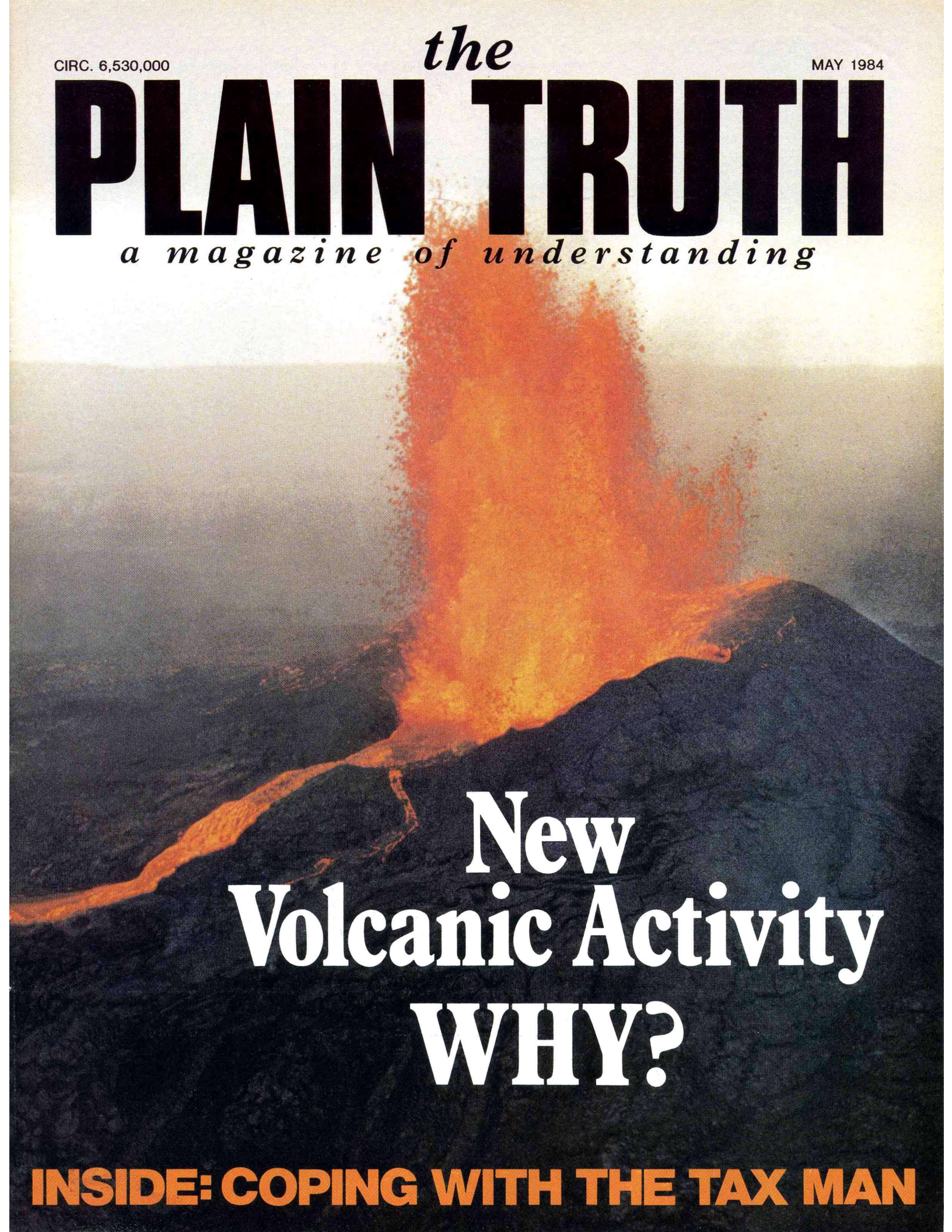
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PLAIN TRUTH

a magazine of understanding



**New
Volcanic Activity
WHY?**

INSIDE: COPING WITH THE TAX MAN

PERSONAL FROM



Why God Permits Human Suffering

LOOK at the world today! War, famine, pestilence! Poverty, inequality, hunger, want! Sickness, disease, suffering, death! Crime, graft, dishonesty, corruption! Insanity, degeneration, decay! Unhappiness, fear, wretchedness and woe!

How, so many are asking, can a supreme, all-powerful God of LOVE permit it?

WHY is he permitting civilization itself to crumble?

Some are saying, "God isn't fair!"—or "*Is there a God, after all?*" But what do you suppose men would say if God took away their right to think and do as they please? For God could never stop this awful carnage without FORCING men to act according to his will—denying them a free will of their own!

It is *men's ways*, so contrary to God's ways, that have brought this unhappy state. And they have brought on all the world's sorrows and anguish *in spite of* the pleadings of God. He says, "Your ways are not my ways."

God's ways, had they been followed, would have led inevitably to peace, happiness, prosperity and joy. God revealed to the first humans his ways. He pleaded with the human family.

Suppose God had taken the only alternative. Suppose he had FORCED men, against their wills, to have lived according to his laws?

Can't you almost hear the defiant, rebellious,

stiff-necked human race indignantly screaming at the Almighty, "You can't cram your religion down *my* throat!" For it *is* a matter of religion. Can't we see that, had God followed that course, more than ever men would have shouted, "GOD ISN'T FAIR!"

For nearly 6,000 years men have lived in defiance of God's laws. Had God denied them this right to be wrong, men would have accused God of injustice, demanding freedom to follow their own ways.

God's plan has for its purpose the creating of perfect CHARACTER in beings who are separate entities from God yet members of the very family of God. Character cannot be created automatically by fiat—it must be developed through *experience!*

Nor could character be instilled without free moral agency. To achieve this great purpose—that of producing the supreme pinnacle of all God's creation, sons of God having perfect character, man has to be *convinced*, of his own free will, that God's laws are JUST, and that his ways are the only right ways for man! Man must turn to them, voluntarily! This lesson could be learned *only by* EXPERIENCE!

In the beginning, Satan appeared to contest the wisdom of God's law. This law is, simply, LOVE for God and love for neighbor, as defined in the 10 broad principles of the Ten Commandments. A fundamental, spiritual, eternal law. The philosophy Christ taught is that it is more blessed to GIVE than to receive. But Satan argued for the GETTING way. Competition, he argued, is the lifeblood of activity. Self-desire provides incentive to endeavor. Vanity spurs to action. And so, in Satan's philosophy, self-desire, competition, strife, provide the root-principle for accomplishment. The way of GETTING is the way to progress and advancement.

Had not God permitted this selfish way to be tried, tested and demonstrated, God's creatures could argue throughout eternity that they had been denied the better way.

And so God turned over to Satan six days of ONE WEEK, consisting of six one-thousand year days, in which to *demonstrate* the falsity of this way—the way of greed.

During this 6,000 years Satan was permitted to retain DOMINION over all the earth. "Six days," God said, "thou shalt labour, and do all thy work"—his work of deception and

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hate—"but the SEVENTH day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work" (Deut. 5:13-14). Six thousand-year days have been permitted Satan for his labor of DECEPTION. Even then his dominion has been limited to the power of influence and suggestion. Never has God permitted even Satan arbitrarily to force men against their wills.

And so for 6,000 years men have been left free to accept the self-seeking competitive philosophy of Satan, or to follow the Golden Rule of God. And for 6,000 years Satan has labored. And mankind has fallen for his delusion!

Satan's philosophy is the philosophy of the world today. On it our present civilization has been built. A civilization men love and cherish, and for which they patriotically sacrifice their lives! A civilization developed on desire for self-gain, competition, strife! In its success is determined by HOW MUCH a man has been able to GET, not on how well he has served.

God has never left men in ignorance of the TRUE way of life. Always he has made known the true values—the way of his spiritual law of love! Continually God has pleaded, with patience and in love. He set up a nation of his own on earth, pledged to follow his laws, dedicated voluntarily to God's ways of life. But ancient Israel turned from God's ways, and persecuted and killed God's prophets!

God sent his only begotten Son to point men back to the true paths. And him, too, men rejected and killed!

During these 6,000 years since Adam, men continually have spurned God's love, rejected his law, turned a deaf ear to his prophets and his true ministers. They have built a world after the false philosophy of Satan, replete with its pagan customs, traditions and beliefs. Today people are hopelessly engulfed in these false ways, but, being deceived, realize it not at all!

Satan is revealed as the "GOD of this world" (II Cor. 4:4). The original inspired Greek should properly be translated, "the god of *this* AGE."

And this worldly civilization worships its GOD. The appalling fact unrealized by the world is that Satan, not the Eternal, is its god! The Creator God "is *not* the author of confusion," we read in I Corinthians 14:33. Its real author is Satan, the world's god! And so he has his many denominations and sects, all striving in a babylon of confusion!

There is just one thing, it seems, that *all* Satan's ministers can agree upon. "God's LAW," they chorus in unison, "is DONE AWAY!" Yes, they have to tell that in order to draw their salaries! Today the people of organized religion refuse to HEAR the law of the Lord (Isa. 30:8-11). They demand that their ministers preach the soft and smooth things—the deceits! They have turned away from the TRUTH, and are accepting and believing FABLES (II Tim. 4:2-4). They are BITTER against God's law, and against the few who have courage today to proclaim the PLAIN TRUTH of God's Word!

Yes, Satan has *organized* religion. He himself appears, not as a devil with horns and a tail bearing a pitchfork, but "is transformed into AN ANGEL OF LIGHT" (II Cor. 11:14). His ministers are transformed *as* the ministers of righteousness, appearing *AS* the apostles of Christ (verses 13, 15). But they are preaching "*another* Jesus" (verse 4), in the power of "*another* spirit," and deceiving men with "*another* gospel" than the true gospel of the kingdom that Christ brought and Paul and all the apostles preached (Gal. 1:6-7).

Satan's congregations go in for much FORM. "Having a FORM of godliness, but denying the POWER thereof: *from such turn away*," plainly warns God's Word (II Tim. 3:5). The present worldly order—its competitive principles, its customs and traditions, its political systems—is upheld by Satan's religions within every land! Truly, ALL nations are deceived (Rev. 12:9, 17:2, 18:3).

Jesus Christ appeared 1,900 years ago as a messenger bearing a message from God. He brought to an unhappy world steeped in false ways the "GOOD NEWS of the KINGDOM OF GOD." A kingdom now, soon, to replace these crumbling governments of earth!

That kingdom today is near at hand—even at the doors (Luke 21:31).

Thank God, we are near the END of the six working days allotted to Satan's dominion. God's thousand-year sabbath day is just about to dawn!

There is a saying that it is darkest just before the dawn. Now we see on every hand the final fruitage of men's ways. Written in inerasable blood, in human misery, anguish and despair, is the 6,000-year record of EXPERIENCE!

Even now men will not heed this horrible lesson—not until they are FORCED to see it!

But, as Satan's sixth "working day" closes, God is about to step in and supernaturally to interfere!

The coming seventh millennium shall see Satan restrained. Christ will return to rule the earth with all the power of God. God's new order for the next thousand years will restore peace, happiness and joy.

Then men may look back over this present world and COMPARE! Never will God FORCE a single human being, against his own will, into salvation and eternal life.

But, with the 7,000-year record of EXPERIENCE set plainly before seeing eyes, do you think anyone will *want* to return to these ways we seem now to love? Not many, you may be sure of that! Yet some, even then, will rebel.

Finally the world shall acknowledge, of its own free volition, that God's ways are right. Christ, says the scripture, "learned . . . obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. 5:8). Even he who never did wrong! "And *being* MADE perfect"—through experience—"he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (verse 9).

Some day we shall look upon God's plan with breathtaking admiration and awe! The suffering of this present time shall have faded completely from mind. The lessons of experience we shall have with us for eternity! Finally humanity shall accept God's ways of life, KNOWING that they are right ways. The happiness and joy we shall then experience cannot be conceived by our minds today! None will look back and say, "God isn't fair". □