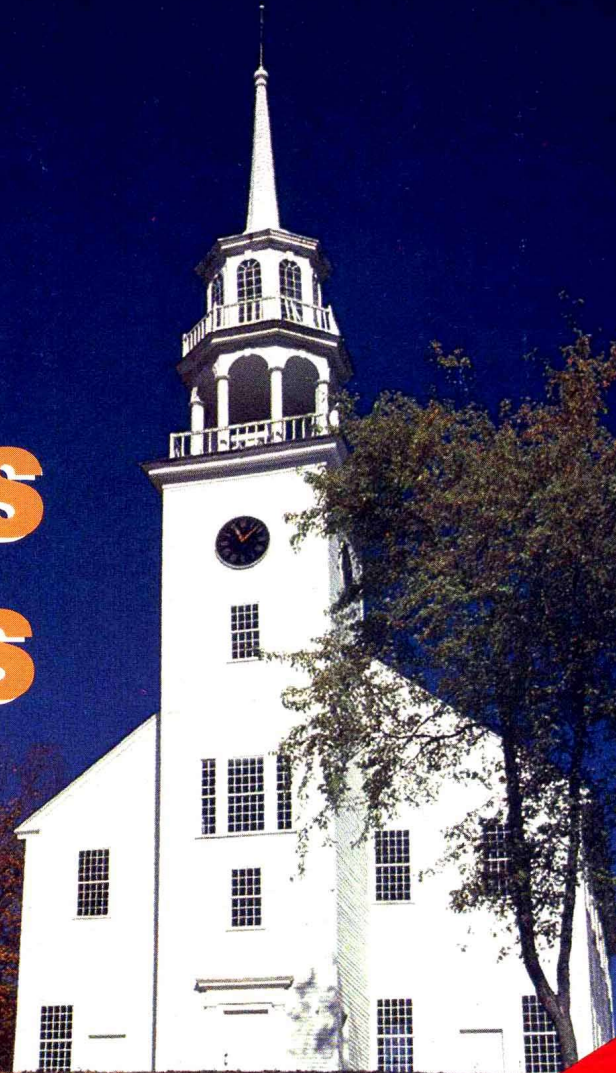


JUNE-JULY 1985

The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

The ROOTS of Today's Religions



**WHY Trials and
Troubles?**
By Herbert W. Armstrong

PERSONAL FROM

Robert Armstrong

WHY Trials and Troubles?

Do YOU have problems, difficulties, troubles?

Some seem to think God's people meet no trials or tests but are blessed with continual smooth sailing.

In my personal responsibilities in the conduct of this great, important, always growing work of God, I have not found it a smooth, easygoing road with no difficulties. I have encountered repeated trials, problems, tests.

There have been critical crises. There has been real persecution. There has been deliberate, vicious, lying, unprincipled misrepresentation. One enemy printed and circulated a list of 20 things he claimed I believed and taught — and I didn't believe or teach a single one of them.

In this work of God there has been deceitful, malicious, ruthless opposition. Obstacles have had to be hurdled frequently. Problems constantly require solution. It has required unwavering faith, perseverance, determination, constant prayer for guidance and reliance on God for both direction and protection.

Does the Bible teach smooth sailing for true Christians whom God is using? Did the men of God, whose lives pleased God, as recorded in the Bible, have only an easy time of it, or were they constantly meeting trials, tests, troubles of every sort — being continually forced to cry out to

God for deliverance? And WHY? Listen to God's own instruction:

"MANY are the afflictions of the *righteous*, but the Lord delivers him out of them all" (Psalm 34:19).

"For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. . . . They are not in trouble as other men . . . behold, these are the ungodly, who are always at ease; they increase in riches. . . . For all day long I have been plagued, and chastened every morning" (Psalm 73:3-14).

"We must through *many tribulations* enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

"All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus *will suffer persecution*" (II Timothy 3:12).

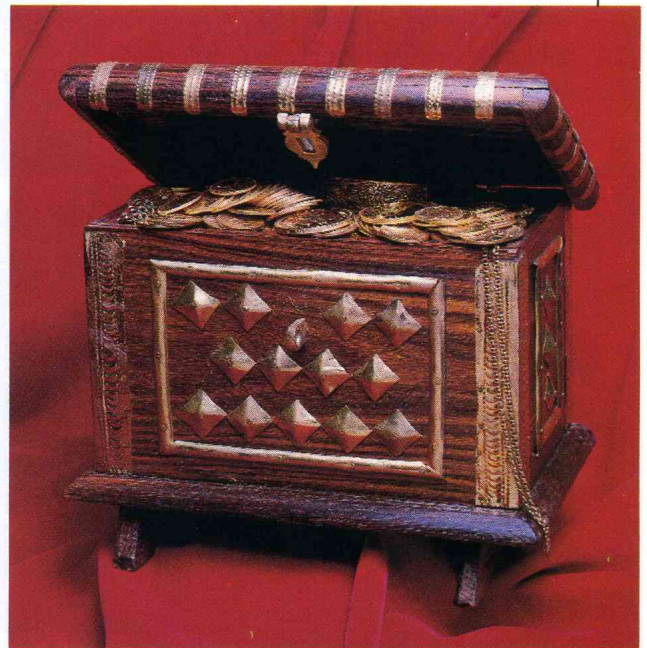
"If we **ENDURE**, we shall also reign with Him" (II Timothy 2:12).

"For as the *sufferings* of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. Now if *we are afflicted*, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for *enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer*" (II Corinthians 1:5-6).

But is God unfair? Does He hate Christians and punish them, while He loves the ungodly and

prosper them? *Not at all!* There is great purpose in the trials the Christian must endure. For these are the very means of strengthening **CHARACTER** — of developing fine, upstanding, strong Christians.

God does not *bless the ungodly* with wealth — they acquire it



More precious than gold, genuine faith in God is irreplaceable in the Christian life. This faith is produced through trials and tests, preparing us for our awesome future in God's Kingdom.

usually in one or both of two ways: by setting their hearts and minds on acquiring it and following through this purpose to the exclusion of all else, until, without realizing it, the pursuit of
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Photo by Hal Finch

Is God Fair?

Why has God permitted 6,000 years of human woe and suffering?

By Herbert W. Armstrong

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 such human woe?

Why is He permitting civilization itself to crumble?

Is God FAIR?

Listen! Some are saying, "God isn't fair!" — or, "Is there a God, after all?"

But what do you suppose people 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 people to act according to His will — denying them a free will of their own!

It is *man's ways*, so contrary to God's ways, that have brought on 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" (Isaiah 55:8).

God's ways, had they been followed, would have led inevitably to peace, happiness, prosperity and joy. God always has revealed to humanity His ways. Always He has pleaded with the human family.

Suppose God had taken the only alternative. Suppose He had

FORCED human beings, 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 mankind would have shouted, "GOD ISN'T FAIR!"

For 6,000 years men and women have lived in defiance of God's laws. Had God denied

them this right to be wrong, they would have accused God of injustice, demanding freedom to follow their own ways.

matically 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 pinnacle of all God's creation, children of God having perfect holy, righteous character — human beings have to be *convinced*, of their own free will, that God's laws are JUST, and that His ways are the only right ways for mankind! 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's perfect way produces every good, yet God has not forced man to obey Him. Man needs to see the evil results of Satan's way.



them this right to be wrong, they 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 that are separate entities from God, yet members of the very Family of God. Character cannot be created auto-



God and love for neighbor, as defined in the ten 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

Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work."

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 and women against their wills. And so for nearly 6,000 years humanity has been left free to accept the self-seeking, competitive philosophy of Satan, or to follow the golden, loving rule of

been able to GET, not on how well he or she has served.

God has never left humanity 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 pleaded through Noah in the days before the Flood. He set up a nation of His own on earth that pledged to follow His laws, dedicated voluntarily to God's way 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, human beings 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 age." And this worldly civilization worships its GOD. The appalling fact unrealized by the world is that Satan, not the Eternal, is its god!

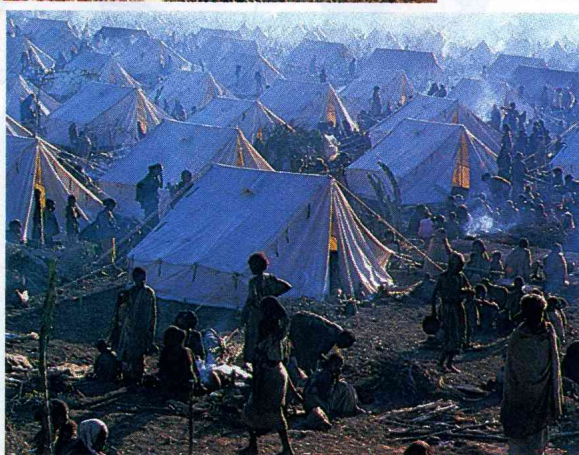
The Creator God "is not the author of confusion," we read in I Corinthians 14:33. Its real author is Satan, the world's god! And so he has his many

denominations and sects, all striving in a Babylon of confusion!

The devil's WORK

There is just one thing, it seems, that most of 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
(Continued on page 19)



for accomplishment. The way of GETTING is the way of 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.

The devil's WEEK

And so God turned over to Satan the first six days of ONE WEEK, consisting of seven 1,000-year days, in which to demonstrate the falsity of this way — the way of greed.

During the first six days of this week of 7,000 years Satan was permitted to retain DOMINION over all the earth.

"Six days," God said, "you shall labor and do all your work" — his work of deception and hate — "but the SEVENTH day is the

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 human beings love and cherish, and for which they patriotically sacrifice their lives! A civilization developed on desire for self-gain, competition, strife! In it success is determined by HOW MUCH an individual has

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part of the Ten Commandments appear in the New Testament. This is a convenient way to “do away” with any command that one does not want to obey, or does not want others to obey. The Bible plainly labels such teachers what they are.

We have already seen how each and every one of the Ten Commandments is still in effect today! Are you going to follow those who want you to disobey God and forfeit eternal salvation, or are you going to obey all of God’s commandments?

If you do not have a copy of our free book *The Ten Commandments*, write for it immediately. It offers a thorough study of how each of God’s Ten Commandments applies to us today.

God’s plain truth

It should be clear now that all 10 commandments are to be obeyed today! It is obvious from hundreds of Old and New Testament scriptures that they are to be followed as a way of life. These commands of God are in the Bible all the way from Genesis to Revelation.

The scriptures show that Jesus Christ of the New Testament was the only God ancient Israel knew. Therefore it was Christ who said: “Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My Commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!” (Deuteronomy 5:29).

Do you want things to go well with you, or do you want the curses of disobedience?

In the very last chapter of the Bible, it is again made clear that the Ten Commandments are still to be obeyed: “Blessed are those who do His commandments [all of them], that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14).

This is the way to live happily and abundantly. It brings the right results. It is the way, through Christ, that we may inherit His free gift of eternal life.

Will you obey and live? □

PERSONAL

(Continued from page 1)

MONEY becomes the pursuit of their god, destroying the soul; or by dishonest means.

But God does bless those who seek Him *first* — not always with great wealth, but always, in the end, with material prosperity they would not have had otherwise. “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,” admonished Jesus, “and all these things [material prosperity in shelter, food, clothing] shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33). That is Jesus’ PROMISE.

God loves to see His servants prospering. He says so through David and John. He corrects and chastens every son whom He loves. He allows His true children to suffer much — to fall into troubles, difficulties, to face trials and tests for their strengthening.

But if we *endure* these tests, hard though they may be — and if we seek *first* our God, His righteousness and His Kingdom, putting material interests second in our hearts, then in His own due time God will always prosper His children even in a material way!

“But we also glory in tribulations, knowing that *tribulation produces perseverance*” (Romans 5:3). Therefore it produces GOOD in and for us.

“My brethren, *count it all joy when you fall into various trials*, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience” (James 1:2-3).

“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning *the fiery trial which is to try you*, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice” (I Peter 4:12-13).

If you had to choose between receiving gold valued at \$50,000 or a great trouble to test your faith, which would you choose? The gold? You’d make a wrong choice if you did.

God says, through Peter: “. . . the genuineness of your faith, *being much more precious than gold that perishes*, though it [the genuineness of faith] is

tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (I Peter 1:7).

Moses suffered affliction in order to lead the children of God, choosing this rather than the riches of the king’s palace and the pleasures of sin for a season.

David suffered constant criticism and false accusation, his enemies continually tried to unseat him and his trials were so great sometimes it seemed God would *never* come to his rescue — yet God always did!

Truly these trials teach us to be *patient* — for it often seems an eternity before God finally delivers us. How often I have experienced this personally. Yet, *always* God has intervened *before it was too late!*

God chose Paul to be an apostle of Christ, and the Lord said, “I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake” (Acts 9:16). And late in life Paul wrote: “In all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments [people probably would call Paul a crook, a racketeer, an impostor and a jailbird today], in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings” (II Corinthians 6:4-5).

Paul outlined more of his troubles in II Corinthians 11:23-28.

Perhaps a chosen servant of God may be called upon to endure more trials and tests than other Christians — but every Christian shall suffer persecution and meet fiery trials, sorrow, troubles, tests of faith. All our readers who are Christians will understand. Let us not grumble. Let us have FAITH, and endure in our faith *patiently*.

All these problems, troubles and trials are allowed to test us, strengthen us in faith and character and prepare us for joy eternally in God’s Kingdom. Paul wrote, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the GLORY which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18). □

Is God Fair?

(Continued from page 3)

religion refuse to HEAR the law of the Lord (Isaiah 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 Timothy 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 "transforms himself into an *angel of light*" (II Corinthians 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 a "different gospel" than the true Gospel of the Kingdom that Christ brought and all the apostles preached (Galatians 1:6-7).

Satan's congregations go in for much FORM. "Having a FORM of godliness but denying its POWER. And from such people turn away!" plainly warns God's Word (II Timothy 3:5).

The present worldly order — its competitive principle, its customs and traditions, its political systems — are upheld by Satan's churches within every land! Truly, ALL nations are deceived (Revelation 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 always darkest just before the

dawn. Now we see on every hand the final fruitage of men's ways. Written in unerasable 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 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" (Hebrews 5:8-9)! Even He who never did wrong! "And *having been perfected*" — through experience — "He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him."

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! Through all eternity we shall worship and praise the eternal God for His wisdom, His mercy, His LOVE!

Do you think anyone, then, will look back and say, "God isn't fair"? □

Joy of Teaching

(Continued from page 8)

so often befall them in this age. And people all over the world will begin to understand the way of God.

As they rebuild their shattered cities and resettle their once-devastated farmlands, you will be there, guiding and leading them in a way that works.

Preparing now

The experiences you have had in this life will be turned to good advantage to help people in the world tomorrow, just as Paul used his experiences to help us (II Corinthians 1:6-7). In that day you will look back with gratitude on the trials you face now. Through these experiences God is teaching us valuable lessons.

On the Sabbaths and Holy Days, you will teach your people in groups. At other times, perhaps in the evenings after work, you'll be able to get to know them as families and individuals.

Remember that with a glorified, immortal mind and body, you will never get tired or run out of energy. You'll have all the time you need to fulfill the needs of those God has sent you to serve.

Some of them will find the new way of life easy. Others may find it hard to adjust. Eventually the people that you have taught will be ready to be born into the Kingdom of God. It will be the greatest day of their lives.

And you will be there to share it. As they stand before the throne of God, waiting to receive their reward, you will have the deep satisfaction of knowing that you helped them achieve this, the greatest possible success.

God wants every one of us to experience the joy of teaching.

For a more detailed look at what the Bible reveals the world tomorrow will be like, write for our free booklet *The Wonderful World Tomorrow — What It Will Be Like*. Just mail the literature request envelope in this issue or send your request to our address nearest you. □