

## Articles and Sermons :: The 1906 San Francisco Earthquake

**The 1906 San Francisco Earthquake - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2011/3/11 14:50**

By Frank Bartleman

"Frank Bartleman was an early leader of the Pentecostal movement at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, California. He was a central figure in the Azusa Street revival of 1906. His reports published in the holiness press heralded a world-wide revival. Bartleman's journalism helped to inform the world of the Pentecostal renewal and was largely responsible for promoting a revival that is still spreading throughout the world. The following is an excerpt from Azusa Street, Frank Bartleman's chronicle of the birth of the Pentecostal movement."

I found the earthquake had opened many hearts. I was distributing especially my last tract, "The Last Call." It seemed very appropriate after the earthquake. Sunday, April 22, I took 10,000 of these to the New Testament Church. The workers seized them eagerly and scattered them quickly throughout the city.

Nearly every pulpit in the land was working overtime to prove that God had nothing to do with earthquakes and thus allay the fears of the people. The Spirit was striving to knock at hearts with conviction, through this judgment. I felt indignation that the preachers should be used of Satan to drown out His voice. Just as he later used them to stir up hatred and murder, during the great war. Even the teachers in the schools labored hard to convince the children that God was not in earthquakes. The devil put on a big propaganda on this line.

I had been much in prayer since the earthquake, and had slept little. After the shock in Los Angeles the Lord told me definitely He had a message for me for the people. On the Saturday after, He gave me a part of it. On Monday the rest was given. I finished writing it at 12:30 a.m. Tuesday, ready for the printer. I kneeled before the Lord and He met me in a powerful way, a powerful witness that the message was from Him. I was to have it printed in the morning. From that time until 4 a.m., I was wonderfully taken up in the spirit of intercession. I seemed to feel the wrath of God against the people and to withstand it in prayer. He showed me He was terribly grieved at their obstinacy in the face of His judgment on sin. San Francisco was a terribly wicked city.

He showed me all hell was being moved to drown out His voice in the earthquake, if possible. The message He had given me was to counteract this influence. Men had been denying His presence in the earthquake. Now He would speak. It was a terrific message He had given me. I was to argue the question with no man, but simply give them the message. They would answer to Him. I felt all hell against me in this, and so it proved. I went to bed at 4 o'clock, arose at 7, and hurried with the message to the printer.

The question in almost every heart was, "Did God do that?" But instinct taught men on the spot that He had. Even the wicked were conscious of the fact. The tract was set up quickly. The same day it was on the press, and the next noon I had my first consignment of the tract. I was impressed I must hasten and get them to the people as quickly as possible. I was reminded that the ten days I was called by the Lord to prayer was up the very day I received the first of the tracts. I understood it all now, clearly.

I distributed the message speedily in the missions, churches, saloons, business houses, and in fact everywhere, both in Los Angeles and Pasadena. Besides I mailed thousands to workers in nearby towns for distribution.

Many raved at the message. A man followed me on the street raving like a maniac. He followed me into a business house, to do me violence. But the Lord protected. He then tore my tract up publicly at the curb, to show his hate. Many threw the message down in a rage, only to pick it up again and read it. It seemed God held them to it.

Everyone was curious for the tract, though it burned the most of them like fire. Sometimes they would get so excited on the street cars they would get off before they reached their street. My very presence seemed to convict many. The message struck consternation to thousands of souls. I have never written a tract that had so much influence.

Sunday, May 11, I had finished my "Earthquake" tract distribution. Then the burden suddenly left me. My work was done, Seventy-five thousand had been published and distributed in Los Angeles and Southern California, in less than three weeks' time. At Oakland, Brother Manley, of his own volition, had printed and distributed 50,000 more, in the Bay Cities

and 'round about, in about the same space of time. The following are some extracts from the "Earthquake" tract:

"But what had God to do with earthquakes? 'When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness' (Isaiah 26:9). 'Which removeth the mountains, when He overturneth them in His anger, which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble' (Job 9:5-6). 'The mountains quake at Him, and the hills melt; and the earth is upheaved at His presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken asunder by Him' (Nahum 1:5-6). 'And I will punish the world for their evil. Therefore I will make the heavens to tremble, and the earth shall be shaken out of her place, in the day of His fierce anger' (Isaiah 13:11, 13).

"Then the earth shook and trembled, the foundations also of the mountains moved, and were shaken because He was wroth. There went up a smoke in His wrath, and fire out of His mouth devoured. The Lord thundered from Heaven, and the Most High uttered His voice. Then the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were laid bare, by the rebuke of the Lord, at the blast of the breath of His anger' (Psalm 18).

"Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and turneth it upside down (perverteth the face thereof), and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. The foundations of the earth do shake, the earth is utterly broken, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall stagger like a drunken man, and shall be moved to and fro. The transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it.' (Isaiah 24:1, 18, 20). 'Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of Hosts with earthquakes, and great noise, and the flame of a devouring fire.' (Isaiah 29:6). 'Men shall go into the caves of the rocks, from before the terror of the Lord, when he arises to shake terribly the earth' (Isaiah 2:19). 'And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air and there was a great earthquake' (Revelation 16:17,18).

And will you claim there is no God in earthquakes? John Wesley has said, 'Of all the judgments which the righteous God inflicts on sinners here, the most dreadful and destructive is an earthquake.' " "From "Earthquake Tract," April 1906.

The San Francisco earthquake was surely the voice of God to the people on the Pacific Coast. It was used mightily in conviction, for the gracious after revival. In the early "Azusa" days both heaven and hell seemed to have come to town.

Excepted from Frank Bartleman's, Azusa Street, Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1980.