

THE CAUSE AND CURE OF EARTHQUAKES*

*Come, behold the works of the Lord,
who has made desolations in the earth. (Psalm 46:8)*

Of all the judgments which the righteous God inflicts on sinners here, the most dreadful and destructive is an earthquake. This he has lately brought on our part of the earth, and thereby alarmed our fears, and bid us "prepare to meet our God!".... Now, that God is himself the Author, and sin the *moral* cause, of earthquakes, (whatever the natural cause may be) cannot be denied by any who believe the Scriptures... Here I want to give you some directions suitable to the occasion. And this is the more needful, because you do not know how soon the late earthquake, wherewith God has visited us, may return...

1. Wherefore, Fear God, even that God can in a moment cast both body and soul into hell!... Ought we not all to cry out, "Great and marvelous are your works, Lord God Almighty! Who shall not fear you, O Lord, and glorify your name? For your judgments have been manifested!" (Rev. 15:3, 4)... O that his fear might this moment fall upon all you who hear these words; constraining every one of you to cry out, "My flesh trembles for fear of you, and I am afraid of your judgments!" (Ps. 119:120)... O that all might see that His hand is lifted up and ready to strike; it is stretched out still. He shakes his rod over a guilty land, a people fit for destruction! For is not this the nation to be visited? "Shall I not punish them for these things?" says the Lord. "And shall I not avenge myself on such a nation as this?" (Jer. 5:9) What but national repentance can prevent national destruction?

2. "Now consider this, you who forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver!" (Ps. 50:22) So that iniquity may not be your ruin, repent! This is the second advice I would offer you; or, rather, the first enforced upon you farther, and explained. Fear God, and depart from evil; repent, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance; break off our sins this moment. "Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3)... The Lord was in the recent earthquake and by it put a solemn question to your conscience: "Are you ready to die?" "Have you made your peace with God?" If the earth should just now open its mouth, and swallow you, what would become of you?...

3. This is the third advice I would give you: Repent and believe the Gospel. Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will yet be saved. "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish when his wrath is kindled" (Psalm 2:12). Repentance *alone* will profit you nothing, unless you confess with broken hearts the most damnable of all your sins, your unbelief; your having rejected, or not accepted, Jesus Christ as your only Savior. Neither can you repent unless he himself gives the power... Call upon Him now, O sinner! And continue in prayer, till he answers you in peace and power! Wrestle for the blessing! Your life, your soul, is at stake!...

John Wesley

* Excerpts from a sermon preached by John Wesley occasioned by a series of devastating earthquakes that hit Lisbon, Portugal. Sermon #129. The Cause and Cure of Earthquakes." First published in 1750.