

# Icarus and Quakes

On the Summer Solstice 1968 San Francisco will enter into Eternity

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There is a rumor going around, a rumor of great tremors. Last week Chief Reddin called in the National Guard, set up an emergency morgue in the Pan Pacific, and declared L.A. a disaster area. You may already have heard: earthquakes are expected this summer, perhaps even this month.

California is going to break away from the continent and drop off into the Pacific Ocean.

There is also some table talk about a small planetoid called Icarus which we have been told is whirling toward the earth at a speed of 14,000 miles per hour. A rumor was circulating a few months back that the U.S. has armed three Saturn missiles with hydrogen warheads to blow it out of the sky if it came too close.

If the rumors are true, we are about twenty pages into the scenario of every science fiction picture made that pits the eggheads and the military against the mysteries of the cosmos. The special effects could run into the billions.

About earthquakes we know very little—and less about collisions with other planets or comets.

Meteors are constantly bombarding the earth but few can pass through the atmospheric shield before they are consumed.

So why worry? How can you prepare yourself against an earthquake if you don't know where or when it will strike? And fretting over meteors, planetoids, comets or other celestial bodies colliding with the earth has to rate near the end of the paranoids handbook for survival.

So, who is worried? And why?

*The New York Times* reported on March 16 of this year that the "terrain in the vicinity of San Francisco is being warped at a rate that some earthquake specialists consider alarming.

"Measurements made in two areas south of where the San Andreas fault enters that city have shown distortion of the landscape amounting to a half inch per mile during the last year. Hills on the opposite sides of the fault are apparently being pushed slowly apart.

"It is feared that this may indicate a buildup of strain in the fault zone. It was the release of strain through a sudden big slippage along the San Andreas fault that brought much of San Francisco down in ruins in the earthquake of 1906."

The *Times* article reported the findings of Dr. Peter A. Franken, professor of physics at the University of Michigan.

Dr. Franken observed that the strain level along the fault now exceeds that prior to the 1906 quake. He warned of a catastrophe that "quite possibly" could severely damage both San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Dr. Franken described the potential disaster in very dramatic terms, circulated publicly by the university's news service.

He declared that "the Golden Gate and Oakland Bay Bridges could be shaken down and the freeways cluttered with wreckage, isolating San Francisco from outside help."

Although scientists at Menlo Park research center outside of San Francisco are not as alarmed as Dr. Franken, they did report that “the discovery of changes in the terrain near San Francisco justified serious concern.”

An extremely ominous fact was brought to light when tracings of present housing developments were made over 1906 photographs. The new subdivisions were built directly over the fault.

In Los Angeles the situation is even worse. Not only are subdivisions being built near faults and on unsafe terrain, but the withdrawal of large quantities of oil has resulted in dangerous earth faulting.

Dr. Franken is just one of many experts in the field worried about population density along the San Andreas fault.

Jess Stearn, researching the readings of Edgar Cayce, whose predictions we shall deal with in more detail later made similar observations. (*Edgar Cayce: The Sleeping Prophet*)

Stearn goes on to quote Benioff's fellow Cal Tech professor, D.E. Hudson, also an expert on the mechanics of earthquakes.

After observing that every one of the seventeen million people in California was living on or near a potential earthquake, he went on to say that “More people are going to be killed in the future than have been killed in the past, and more buildings are going to be damaged and destroyed, simply because the earth is filling up with people and their buildings. A few years previously, the Good Friday earthquake in Alaska would have done comparatively little damage and killed a few people. There was nothing there to damage and nobody there to be killed.”

On March 21 C.F. Richter, professor of seismology at Cal Tech, lecturing on his favorite subject, told his audience that there were many minor jolts that could cause a great deal of damage without causing a widespread disaster. He warned, however, that nobody living in California was really safe.

“If people are worried about quakes, Richter said, “They should move out of the state.”

Richter stressed the character of the ground and composition of the soil, rather than the distance from the town.

He pointed out that most of our cities and towns are located on soil that has been deposited by water or on beach sand—the most unstable kinds of terrain.

Although the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco is the most well remembered of the California quakes, scientists believe that the quake of 1857 was of a much greater magnitude.

However, since California was sparsely settled at the time, only relatively slight damage was recorded. If an earthquake of the same intensity were to occur in the Los Angeles area now, the devastation would be astronomical.

Not long after the last minor tremor in Southern California a few months back, Richter attempted to put the lid on speculation and predictions. “Nobody,” he said, “can predict an earthquake.”

But predictions and speculation within the scientific community continue and intensify with every new report of earth slippage or volcanic upheaval. In the past few weeks there have been quite a few severe quakes in Japan, the Fiji Islands, Iran (where at least 50 were killed), and one in the Pacific with an epicenter 5300 miles north west of Los Angeles which caused tidal waves throughout the Pacific area.

That nobody can predict an earthquake—a statement made by one of the most eminently qualified scientists in the field—harks back to another statement made nearly a century ago by a man whose background in geophysics was sparse, but whose instincts were sharp. To the question of when and where the next earthquake would occur, Mark Twain recalled, “I was gratified to be able to answer promptly, and I did. I said that I did not know.”

But if the exact time and place can no more be determined now than it could a century ago; one thing, at least is certain: An earthquake is coming, and it may be sooner than we think.

Following the Good Friday Quake, the government began showing increasing interest and concern—especially since the stresses along known fault zones are now considered critical. Several crash programs are under way with the goal of finding some means to do what prophets and astrologers alone could do in the past ages: tell us where, when and, most important, why.

Sensitive instruments such as the geodimeter which can measure changes as slight as a fraction of an inch, are being used by geophysicists to record earth movements.

To that first question, Who is worried—the answer is obvious. Jess Stearn noted that many geologists were building, steel-reinforced homes, and many others were leaving California, unwilling to live on a “land mine.”

Why other individuals—real estate speculators, for example—choose to build project homes and buildings ON TOP of known faults is a topic we shall explore later.

In the meantime—what about Icarus? We mustn't forget Icarus; for while you have been reading about the horrors in store for us from within, Icarus has moved about 2500 miles closer to the earth. Will it hit? Will it come close enough to disturb the gravitational balance that keeps the oceans from inundating coast lines and the earth from slipping beneath our feet? Reassurances aside, does anybody really know?

So, who else is worried?

Last Saturday the L.A. Police Dept. and the National Guard staged an exercise they called operation "U.O." The initials stand for "Unusual Occurrence."

The unusual occurrence they assumed happening that day was a major earthquake.

Attempts were made to coordinate efforts in establishing emergency headquarters to prevent loss of life, property, civil disorder and whatever else may occur when, in the words of Yeats, "things fall apart," and "the center cannot hold."

They further defined "U.O." as an unscheduled event—a happening. Included in the list of potential holocausts were, "fire, flood, storm, tidal wave, landslide, wreck—(what insurance companies call "acts of God")—and also "man caused" events, such as "enemy action" and civil disturbance."

In 1950 Immanuel Velikovsky published a book entitled *Worlds in Collision*, which was destined to shake the foundations of contemporary scientific thought—particularly in the fields of natural history, evolution, and geophysics—in much the same way that Einstein stormed the castle doors of Newtonian physics a generation before. For Velikovsky offered overwhelming evidence of global catastrophes that shaped the course of history, and all but obliterated the sacred Doctrine of uniformity.

The Velikovsky Theory, a revolution when it was first published, has since gained an abundance of support from recent discoveries in archeology, astronomy, geology—and recent space explorations such as the Mariner 4 probe of the surface of Venus.

In *Worlds In Collision*, Velikovsky's reconstructed history was based upon the premise that a comet formed when a portion of the mass of Jupiter broke away, collided with the earth; and that subsequently this comet also collided with Mars. The results of these celestial battles was-worldwide upheaval.

The erratic comet which collided with the earth and with Mars eventually stabilized in solar orbit, and became the planet Venus.

"A conception of ages that were brought to their end by violent changes in nature is common all over the world. The number of ages differs from people to people and from tradition to tradition. The difference depends on the number of catastrophes that the particular people retained in its memory, or the way it reckoned the end of an age.

With those remarks Velikovsky introduces modern man to the ancient concept of world ages. He cites the Greek tradition "called the supreme year by Aristotle, at the end of which the sun, moon, and all the planets return to their original position. This supreme year has a great winter, called by the "Greeks kataklysmos, which means deluge, and a great summer, called by the Greeks ekpyrosis, or combustion of the world. The world, actually, seems to be inundated and burned alternately in each of these epochs."

Velikovsky cites examples of the concept of world ages appearing in a number of ancient culture some of which survive today.

"The Mayas counted their ages by the names of their consecutive suns. These were called Water Sun, Earthquake Sun, Hurricane Sun, Fire Sun. "These suns mark the epochs to which are attributed the various catastrophes the world has suffered."

According to the sacred Hindu book Bhagavata Purana, there were four ages in which man was nearly destroyed by cataclysms; We are now in the fifth age. The book describes seven world ages.

Returning to the question of California quakes—or earthquakes and volcanic eruptions in general—one might conclude that these upheavals result from cosmic influences, that is, the gravitational relationship between 'he earth and other planets, as well as forces hidden beneath earth's crust. That this relationship directly included man is evident in the fact that religious teachings and prophecies of the ancients described the events in terms of world

ages, and connected them with the affairs of men. Man's confusion and destruction time and again paralleled the destructive forces of nature.

If one assumes that man exists in relationship to nature—as an electrochemical aspect of the earth itself—rather than an impartial observer of phenomena, then whatever effects the earth is simultaneously affecting man; and the affairs of man to some degree effect the earth.

This may or may not be—if you will forgive the pun—an earth-shaking discovery. If science can create a machine that records the minutest tremor in the earth, it is conceivable that his brain (also a fine instrument, and indispensable for earning Nobel Prizes at Cal Tech) has the capacity of receiving and recording these shocks as well.

It is certainly true that an age is coming to an end—symbolically, even if it is not yet physically apparent. But a new one arises from the sea.

And California—haven't we witnessed in the last two years its break-away from the rest of the country? The love revolution found its magnetic center in San Francisco and Los Angeles; for thousands of people last summer it became the place to break away from an old life style, from an old age worn out with wars, with materiality, deceit and corruption and bloodshed.

If the state is to slip into the Pacific, will it not be the actualization of a thought shared by those who already separated themselves not out of a lust for gold, but out of a hunger to understand themselves, and the coming age?

If the North American continent is to vanish—is to be taken from us, is it not something we have already done ourselves? Haven't we already raped the land, ripped down the forests, exploited the mountains and soil, sucked the oil from the ground, polluted the water, killed the wildlife—murdered the Indian caretakers of the land—and hidden the sun in a cloud of poison?

By creating a sacred concept of private property, haven't we all been deprived of our basic and natural relationship to the land?

Are we fit keepers of the land—when we hide from it behind concrete, asphalt and steel?

Should we mourn the victims swallowed up in their homes along sandy crevices and earthquake faults, because land speculators were too greedy to read the warnings of the land—and filled gaping holes with sand to make a buck and split?

Are you worried about Icarus, about the giant quake—being dumped into the sea?

Its already begun.

# fifth Estate

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