

to be engulfed in the yawning earth, or overwhelmed by tidal wave. How vividly we realized that we were on the line of those earth-throes which have belted the world with ghastly wounds, or with the lava-scabs of extinct volcanoes! In John's day, as now, the marks of these terrible visitations of Deity were seen everywhere on island and shore. In sight from the cliffs of Patmos was the island of Thera, formed by a "burning mountain cast into the sea" (Rev. viii: 8); the harbor being but the crater extinguished by the waters. Eusebius mentions the earthquakes of the year 17 A.D., which shook Ephesus, Sardis, Philadelphia, and the whole region where the Seven Churches were afterward planted. In A.D. 46 the Islet of Therasia lighted up the Ægean with its volcanic glare. Seneca, writing nearer to the time of the Apocalypse, said, "The world itself is being shaken to pieces." John naturally wrought the impression of these scenes into his sublime metaphors of the convulsive throes of the moral world, when the earth should open, as by volcanic rift, even to the bottomless pit.

As we gaze upon Patmos, seventeen centuries roll away. With them the village and monastery yonder disappear. In the quarries are gangs of men, who for crimes against the State, have been sentenced to exile from communion with their fellow men. Among them at their toil, or allowed to roam at liberty over the lonely rocks, in the solitude of his thoughts, is an old man, bent with nearly a century's weight. His garb is mean, limited to the kilt about the loins, and the skull-cap or turban of wound cloths protecting his head from storm and sun—the only raiment of the quarry slave. But how radiant his face with the beauty of his pure and loving soul! and his eyes how bright with the lustre of deeper, wiser worlds than this! This man has seen, with the bodily eye, Jesus, the Cross, the Resurrection and the Ascension; and for perhaps seventy years his soul has stood almost within the portal of the spiritual glory of his Lord. And now the "door in heaven" is opened; his inspired thought is so great, the revelation so stupendous, that he sweeps sea and land and sky, the whole circuit of human history, custom and thought, and above all, those other worlds of past revelation, for figures vast enough to even shadow forth his own; and even then—such is the limitation of human language—he can reproduce only the shadow of his inward vision. Like Paul, he sees things which it is not lawful (possible) for him to utter.