

miraculous signs should follow them that believed. Prior to that time, while He was yet in mortality, He had said that "this gospel of the kingdom" should be preached in all the world as a witness unto all nations and then should the end come. He described the signs that were to precede His second advent.

In speaking of "the end," it is evident that He was referring to more than one event. It is the opinion of Canon Farrar and other Christian scholars that He had in view two horizons, one of them ending at the destruction of Jerusalem, the annihilation of the Jewish commonwealth, and the other referring to the end of the world, the fall of Babylon and the termination of wickedness. One of the "ends" was the type and foreshadowing of the other. The terrible judgments that fell upon the guilty and doomed city of the Jews in the year 70, were symbolical of the more awful judgments that are to overtake the world in the last days. These judgments John foresaw, and they were also foreseen by Joseph Smith, the Prophet of the last dispensation.

We may read in the Acts of the Apostles how the promise made to them by the Savior regarding the miraculous signs was fulfilled. The Holy Ghost fell upon them and they "began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." They tarried at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on High and then went forth to preach the Gospel and scatter its blessings among all nations—healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out devils, and doing many other wonderful works. This was the type of a still wider diffusion of the Gospel, a still mightier display of God's power that was to be witnessed in the latter days. In forty years the Apostles had planted the standard of Christianity in all parts of the Roman empire, founding churches in Asia Minor, Greece and Italy, the great theaters of human action at that time, and had penetrated to the barbarous countries fringing on all sides the mighty empire, from Scythia on the north to Ethiopia on the south, and from India on the east to Spain and Britain on the west. One by one the Apostles laid down their lives as martyrs for the truth. Peter, it is said, perished at Rome. This, however, is by no means certain, though our Catholic friends, in their zeal to establish apostolic succession for the pope, build much upon that foundation. Peter is said to have been crucified during the reign of the Emperor Nero, a monster of cruelty, who inaugurated the first great persecution against the Christians. The tradition of Peter's death is that fleeing from Rome, where he was in danger, he met the Lord walking toward the city. "Where goest thou, O Lord?" inquired the Apostle. "I am going to Rome to be crucified again," was the sad and reproachful answer. Peter took the hint, shook off his timidity—a temporary visitation of his former weakness—returned to the city and heroically met his doom. Not deeming himself worthy to die as did his Lord, he begged the boon, on learning that he was to be crucified, that it might be with his head downwards, a request that was granted by his executioners. Paul is known to have suffered martyrdom at Rome under Nero. One of his epistles to Timothy, written at Rome, speaks of his approaching end, and among the

last words of this noble servant of God were the sublime sentences: "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith." Paul, being a Roman citizen, had the honor of being beheaded, instead of suffering the ignominious death of crucifixion. These are samples of the treatment meted out to the servants of God—the Apostles of Christ—in ancient times. All but one were put to death for the testimony of Jesus. The survivor, John, after an ineffectual attempt had been made upon his life by throwing him into a caldron of boiling oil, was banished, A. D. 96, to the Isle of Patmos, where God gave him the great vision recorded in the Apocalypse.

What was that vision? What meant that wonderful revelation? Christendom says it is a sealed book, an enigma, and but few profess to understand even a small portion of its sublime and poetic mystery. It remained for Joseph Smith to unlock that sealed book and declare by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost the meaning of many of the things therein written.

The first portion of the book speaks for itself. It is a warning to the seven churches of Asia, founded by Paul and others of the Apostles. Already were the signs of the apostasy, that "falling away" which Paul had predicted, beginning to show themselves in the Christian Church; already were its disciples turning away their ears from the truth and turning them unto fables. The days when they would not "endure sound doctrine" were approaching. They were therefore reminded of their condition, admonished of the consequences of pride, sensuality, worldliness, and the neglect of their duties as Saints; and John was told to "write" what the Spirit said unto the churches. But the warning seems to have been unheeded. The "falling away" continued, the apostasy gradually went on, Christianity became worldly, wealthy, proud, luxurious, corrupt, until finally it lost its spiritual gifts and graces. The Gospel was perverted, the Priesthood taken away, and the Church was left with an empty "form of godliness," "denying the power thereof." Christianity paganized itself in order to be popular with the Roman world and escape persecution. It became so popular that the emperor himself—Constantine—became a Christian. But that hour, so seemingly auspicious, was not so in reality. It was the hour of the Church's decay; and from that time, though many good men and women remained in it, Ichabod was written upon its towers; its pristine power and glory had departed. Hence the necessity for the Gospel's restoration in the latter days.

John, after being told what he should write unto the seven churches, saw a vision of the past and the future. He beheld a sea of glass like unto crystal, shining before a heavenly throne, upon which sat a glorious being holding in his hand a book sealed with seven seals. Joseph Smith declares that that sea of glass was the earth in its sanctified and immortal state, and that the book with seven seals symbolized the history of the earth—its true history—the hidden acts of men and the mysteries of God pertaining to this planet, during the seven thousand years of its temporal existence. The opening of the first seal was the revealing of the acts of the first thousand years, the opening of the sec-

ond seal the revealing of the acts of the second thousand years, and so on until the seventh. We gather from this and other teachings of the Prophet that this earth has been appointed a certain time in which to accomplish its mortal probation, prior to its glorification. It was created, not as something out of nothing, as many have absurdly taught and supposed, but was organized from everlasting spirit and element, and was made for the children of God, firstly as a temporary abode, and lastly as an eternal inheritance. It has been given a certain time in which to fulfill its mission as a mortal creature. It keeps the law of God, the celestial law, which means that it lives by every word that proceeds from His mouth, and because of this it shall be sanctified. Yea, though it die, yet shall it live again, be resurrected, to shine as a celestial body, as "a sea of glass mingled with fire," and beings of a celestial order shall inherit it forever. We are taught that men and women, the sons and daughters of God, who were spirits in His presence, were sent here to take mortal tabernacles and undergo experiences that would in due time exalt them to the plane occupied by their Father and Mother in heaven. Earth is to become a heaven. Man is to become a God. The difference between the human and the divine is a matter of education and development. Gods and men are of the same species, and it is just as reasonable that God's children should attain to the fulness of His spiritual stature, as that man's children should grow to the fulness of his physical stature. The Son of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Neither need we, His sons and daughters, think it robbery to aspire to that glorious plane where stand God our Father and Jesus Christ, our Elder Brother. He has made it possible for us all to come unto Him and be like Him. He laid down His life to bridge the chasm and enable us to cross it over.

Adam fell that man might be. If Adam and Eve had not transgressed, had not partaken of the forbidden fruit, they never could have had posterity. It was just as much a portion of the divine plan that they should become mortal, to colonize and people this earth, as that Christ should die to redeem it. Adam was chosen for this work, as Jesus was chosen for His mission, as Abraham, Jeremiah and others were chosen for theirs. They were foreordained in the presence of God. Joseph Smith says that every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of this world was ordained to that very purpose in the councils of heaven, before this world was. They are the "noble and great ones," spoken of in the Book of Abraham, translated by the Prophet Joseph, who, as well as Abraham, was one of the choice souls of whom the Lord said: "These I will make my rulers."

He showed unto Abraham the mysteries of the pre-existence and the glories of the starry heavens. He told him that there was a great planet named Kolob, which was nearest to His throne, and that it revolved once in a thousand years. That period, then, is one day with God, as the Apostle Peter declares. It was evidently such a "day" that was referred to when the Lord said to Adam: "The day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" for Adam lived