

**AN EXPOSITION OF PART
OF THE 24TH AND
25TH CHAPTERS OF
ST MATTHEW, PP. 5-37**

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OF THE 24TH AND
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AN
EXPOSITION
OF
PART OF THE 24TH AND 25TH CHAPTERS OF
ST MATTHEW :
TOGETHER WITH
THE SIGNS OF CHRIST'S COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF
HEAVEN, THAT IS, THE GLORIOUS APPEARING OF THE GREAT
GOD AND OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.



BY
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" And, while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel :

" Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts, 1st Chapter, 10, 11.

" For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,
" Teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world :

" Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ :

" Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

" These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." Titus, 2d Chapter, 11-15.

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TO

ALL THEM THAT LOVE CHRIST'S APPEARING,

IS THIS TRACT

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

CONCERNING WHOM ST PAUL SAYS, IN THE 2D EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY,
4TH CHAPTER AND 8TH VERSE,

*"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which
the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not
to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."*

EXPOSITION.

ST MATTHEW, 24TH CHAPTER.

LET us observe, that in the 3d verse of this 24th chapter of St Matthew, the disciples asked our Lord two questions. The first

1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him, for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of

was, "*When shall these things be?*" viz. the destruction of the temple, &c. The second question was, "*What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*"

Our Lord proceeds to answer these questions in succession; but first he gives a warning, which is clearly addressed, not merely to those then present, but to his church, through the various succeeding ages, to the time of his coming again. (Note A.)

This warning is contained in the 4th, and ten following verses, viz. to the end of the 14th; and he concludes it by saying, "*And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come.*" (Note B.)

We shall see afterwards, from the 30th verse, that though the gospel is preached for a witness to all nations, not one tribe of the earth

is converted at his coming, for he says, "*And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn.*" If one tribe was converted, that tribe would rejoice.

Having given them this warning, he recurs to their two questions, and answers them in succession, giving also the intermediate history of his church, and warnings to it.

Their first question was, "*WHEN shall these things be?*" (viz. the destruction of the temple and of Jerusalem, which he had just foretold); and he marks his answer by commencing it in a similar way (which is the common mode of speaking), both question and answer beginning with *When*. (See Note C.)

Our Lord says, "*When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet.*" Let us observe, that this "*when ye*" was not principally addressed to his disciples who were then present. But to his church, and to all who should belong to his church, and see the abomination of desolation stand in the holy place, this "*when ye*" was as much addressed, as it was to the disciples then present. Perhaps none of the apostles were at Jerusalem at the time the events here described took place. History informs us, that part of them had been previously put to death. And to understand this chapter aright, we should, throughout it, bear in mind, that "*no scripture is of any private interpretation,*" but that by it our Lord speaketh to us from heaven. See Hebrews xii. 25.

After warning his church to flee from Jeru-

ware: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilence, and earthquakes, in divers places.

8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.

9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand.)

16 Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains:

17 Let him which is on the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house:

18. Neither let him which is in the field re-

turn back to take his clothes.

19. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days!

20. But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath-day:

21. For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22. And except these days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

the saints made by the beast with seven heads and ten horns, in Rev. xiii. 7, and by the two horned beasts, in the 15th and following verses.

Rome, Pagan and Papal, is used by Satan, the old serpent or dragon, to persecute the church. It is said, in Rev. xiii. 4, "*And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast;*" and in verse 7th, it is said, "*And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them.*" See Rev. ch. 17. (Note D.)

See also Lord Cobham's speech. When examined before the powers of the persecuting Roman Church, he applied the tribulation mentioned in this prophecy of our Lord to the persecution of Christ's church by Rome Papal. (See Note E.)

In Rev. xviii. 24, it is said, "*In her*" (that is, Rome) "*was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth;*" and she is represented, in the 3d verse of this same chapter, as sitting upon the beast with seven heads and ten horns.

Jerusalem formed, as it were, the head-quarters of the church, till the time of its siege by the Romans. It is said, in Acts vi. 7, "*The number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith;*"

salem on seeing the sign mentioned, he goes on to predict the great persecution of his church, to which she was to be exposed from that time to the time immediately preceding his coming again. See Daniel xi. 31st to the 35th verse inclusive.

The persecution of his church, first by Rome Pagan, and then by Rome Papal, partly described in Daniel vii. 21, as the war of the little horn against the saints; and in Rev. xii. the persecution of the woman who brought forth the man-child by the great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, and the war with

and the church seems to have enjoyed, upon the whole, great quietness there, with some few exceptions, after St Paul's conversion: but the great tribulation of the church commenced with their flight from Jerusalem.

Our Lord says, "*Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day*" (observe here, that he addressed his church, for the flight was theirs, and theirs only, so far as we know); "*for then shall be great tribulation,*" &c. And this tribulation lasts down till the signs of his coming again appear; for he says, in the 29th verse, "*Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened,*" &c. &c. But it says in the 22d verse, "*And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened.*" And it appears that the days of the great tribulation were shortened, as its intensity was mitigated, by the prevalence of the Reformation (see what is quoted in Note E, from Lord Cobham's speech before his judges); and it may mean, that, unless the days of this great tribulation had been so shortened, the knowledge of the gospel would have been washed out in a torrent of blood; but this was not permitted, for the sake of the elect, who were afterwards to hear and believe.

Our Lord then warns them against false Christs and false prophets; "*Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold he is in the desert, go not forth*" (Note F); "*behold he is in the secret chambers, believe it not.*" The coming was not to be a merely spiritual one (therefore he warns them against such a mistaken belief), which might take place in the secret chambers, "*for as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*"

The 28th verse appears to be an answer to a question which is contained in St Luke's Gospel, 17th chap. 37th verse, but the answer

23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

25 Behold, I have told you before.

26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth; behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

27 For as the light-

ning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

28 For whosoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

only is given here. In the 29th verse he states, "*Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened,*" &c. &c.

Looking back to the 21st verse, we find that this tribulation commenced with the flight of his church from Jerusalem. The days of tribulation had, therefore, commenced when St John wrote the Revelation; see 1st chap. 9th verse. And the 10th verse of the 2d chapter shews that the tribulations of Christ's church are Satan's persecutions. (See Note G.)

The latter part of the great tribulation is the 1260 years' persecution of the church by Rome Papal; and immediately after their completion, the sun is darkened, &c. &c., the signs of Christ's coming take place, and *then* his coming. (Note H.) And Scripture, speaking of the son of perdition, viz. the Papacy, says, in 2 Thessal. ii. 8, "*Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming;*" so that the papacy prevails till this time arrives, and is not destroyed till Christ's coming; therefore, immediately after the tribulation, viz. at the end of the 1260 years (of the little horn's successful war, the same war mentioned in Rev. xiii. 7.),

30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

32 Now learn a parable of the fig-tree;

the signs of Christ's coming here mentioned begin, viz. the darkening of the sun and moon, and falling of the stars: then Christ comes, in power and great glory, with the clouds of heaven, as described in the 30th and 31st verses, and his elect are caught up to meet him in the air, as is also described in 1 Thes. iv. 14th and following verses; and we see, from 1 Thess. v. 2, that this is the *day* of the *Lord*, which so cometh as a thief in the night.

With regard to the signs of His coming, and