

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

CHAPTER 33.-Of the last Judgement.

III. As Christ would have us to be certainly perswaded, That there shall be a Day of Judgement, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the Godly in their Adversity¹; so, will he have that Day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal Security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come; and, may be ever prepared to say, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, Amen².

Question 1.—*Would Christ have us to be certainly persuaded, that there shall be a Day of Judgment, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity?*

Answer.—Yes. 2 Cor. 5:10, 11; Rom. 8:23-25. God has made the fact absolutely certain that there will be a future judgment, in order that this knowledge may act upon all men as a wholesome motive deterring them from sin; and, at the same time, that it may console the godly in the midst of their adversity. With reference to the *first* object: 1.) The apostle Peter holds forth this truth, that the certainty of the Day of Judgment ought to persuade us to holiness, 2 Pet. 3:11-14. 2.) The certainty and fearfulness of this Day of Judgment provides the underlying reason for many apostolic admonitions, 1 Cor. 4:5; Gal. 6:7, 8; Rev. 20:13. This *looking for the day of God* is one of the directions the apostle gives us, in order to our being eminently *holy and godly in all manner of conversation*, “Look for the day of God as what you firmly believe shall come, and what you earnestly long for.”

With reference to the *second* object: 1.) The apostle Paul teaches that believers are to gather much strength in time of adversity from this certainty of the final judgment, 2 Thess. 1:5-7. 2.) Christ himself calls his people to find shelter in the comfort afforded by the certainty of the approaching judgment, Luke 21:27, 28. There is a rest that remains for the people of God, a rest from sin and sorrow. Though many may be the troubles of the righteous now, yet God will deliver them out of them all. The future rest will abundantly recompense all their present troubles. The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed.

Question 2.—*Will he have that Day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come; and, may be ever prepared to say, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, Amen?*

Answer.—Yes. Matt. 24:36, 41, 43, 44; Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35, 36; Rev. 22:20. That, on the other hand, God has left us in absolute uncertainty with respect to the time at which this great event shall occur; in order to prevent carnal security, and to keep his people ever on the alert and constantly prepared. That the time is intentionally left unknown is expressly affirmed again and again in Scripture: 1.) Christ affirms this truth, Mark 13:32; Matt. 24:36; Luke 12:40; Acts 1:7. 2.) Likewise, the apostles often allude to

¹ 2 Pet. 3:11, 14; 2 Cor. 5:10, 11; 2 Thess. 1:5-7; Luke 21:27, 28; Rom. 8:23-25.

² Matt. 24:36, 41, 43, 44; Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35, 36; Rev. 22:20.

the uncertainty of the time, 1Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10. 3.) So, too, the Revelation presents this uncertainty and enforces it as a great reason of carefulness in life, Rev. 16:15.

The designed effect of the attitude of uncertainty with regard to the time of the second advent and general judgment in which the saints are placed is, that they should regard it as always immediately impending; that they should look forward to it with solemn awe, and yet with joyful confidence; and hence, in view of it, be incited to the performance of duty and the attainment of holiness, and comforted in sorrow, Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:4, 5; James 5:7. It is their duty also *to love, watch, wait for, and hasten unto* the coming of our Lord, Luke 12:35–37; 1 Cor. 1:7, 8; 1 Thess. 1:9, 10; 2 Tim. 4:8; 2 Pet. 3:12; Rev. 22:20. *The coming of the day of God* is what every Christian must hope for and earnestly expect; for it is a day when Christ shall *appear in the glory of the Father*, and evidence his divinity and Godhead even to those who counted him a mere man. The first coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he *appeared in the form of a servant*, was what the people of God earnestly waited and looked for: that coming was for *the consolation of Israel*, Luke 2:25. How much more should they wait with expectation and earnestness for his second coming, which will be the day of their complete redemption, and of his most glorious manifestation! Then he shall *come to be admired in his saints, and glorified in all those that believe*.