

MESSIAH THE PRINCE,
Or, The Mediatorial Dominion of Jesus Christ.
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Sabbath Afternoon Studies: Part 10.

CHAPTER 6.
THE UNIVERSALITY OF CHRIST'S
MEDIATORIAL RULE.
(Continued.)

This branch of his official rule is not less fully illustrated in the history of the Redeemer's life, and death, and mediatorial government, than is his dominion over holy angels. His miracles filled the infernal spirits with dread, and extorted from them a deprecation of the exercise of his power: 'Art thou come to torment us before the time?' [Matt. 8.28.] By his personal conflict with Satan in the wilderness, the arch-fiend of hell was subjected to the mortification of a threefold defeat. Such was the influence exerted by his ministers, that 'even the devils were subject to them through his name;' and, as they proceeded in their work of mercy and benevolence, 'Satan was beheld falling as lightning from heaven.' [Luke 10.17,18.] But his death, his vicarious and meritorious death, was what shook the foundations of Satan's kingdom, and gave the fatal blow to the reign of the god of this world: 'Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross.' [Col. 2.15.] Let me illustrate this a little, as it involves a point of some nicety which is not always well understood.

The power possessed by the devil and his angels over the human race, may be regarded in two lights—either as an unrighteous usurpation, or as a judicial calamity. As regards Satan himself, the former is the view we are to take of it: as regards the overruling providence of God, the latter is the light in which it is to be contemplated. Satan is a usurper; he possesses no lawful authority; as far as he himself is concerned, he can point to no authority from God for the exercise of his wicked and malicious control over man. Yet, notwithstanding this, it is obvious that, without the permission of God, he could have no such control, for a single moment, as that which he actually exercises. He could have no power unless, in this sense, it were given him from above. [John 19.11.] ► Nor can we suppose, that a righteous God would even permit him to have such power, unless for the punishment of those who have violated his law, and exposed themselves to his judicial displeasure. Satan, in himself, has, indeed, no legal right to inflict torment on men; he has no direct moral authority from the Supreme Governor, to execute the threatening of his holy law against transgressors; he holds no such place as even that of *authorised executioner* of the divine vengeance: yet his wrath and malice are, as in the

case of wicked men, made to praise God, by being overruled for the punishment of the guilty violators of his law. In this view it is the guilt of men which gives Satan power. His dominion, usurped though it be on his part, springs from human transgression. But for this, the righteous Lord who doeth righteousness, would never have tolerated, for an instant, the unrighteous usurpation of the prince of this world. ► This being understood, it must be obvious that the overthrow of Satan's power, required, first of all, that legal satisfaction should be given to the claims of the divine law for the sins of men. When this is done, his throne is undermined—his sceptre broken—his arm of might paralysed; and any efforts he can ever afterwards make, are but the feeble attempts of a vanquished foe to recover his lost influence, or the spiteful manifestations of unsubdued but impotent malice. Now this is just what was effected by the death of Christ; and we have here an illustrious display of the inseparable connexion subsisting betwixt his regal and sacerdotal offices. It was on his cross that he triumphed over the principalities and powers of darkness. It was on his Cross that he bruised the serpent's head. ► All legal ground for permitting Satan to continue to exercise his lawless usurpation being at an end, the triumphant Saviour could forthwith exert his power in destroying his influence over the chosen of God. From this point, then, does the victorious Mediator go forth, on his glorious undertaking of destroying the works of the devil. The death of the Cross effected, he is prepared to enter the territories of the prince of darkness; to overthrow his dominion in the hearts of men, and in the institutions of society; to rescue his own children from the fangs of the destroyer; to bind and loose Satan at his pleasure; and to order everything so as best to bring about the period, when 'the devil shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone,' [Rev. 20.10.] and when 'he who has the keys of hell and of death, who openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth, shall so hold him in eternal durance, that he shall not torment his people any more.

3. A middle place, betwixt inanimate creation and angelic intelligences, is occupied by *men*; and they also are under the government of the mediatorial King. 'The Father has given him power over ALL FLESH'—a phrase which in this, as in other parts of Scripture, signifies the whole of mankind, the human race at large. [John 17.2; Luke 3.6, &c.] That he possesses authority over the righteous, the elect, those whom the Father has given to him, cannot be doubted. But that his power, as Mediator, should extend to the non-elect, the ungodly, the world lying in wickedness, may not seem so obvious. A little reflection, however, is all that is required to produce conviction on this point also. ► Those who are given to him, are mingled up for a time with the rest of the human family; they are themselves, at first, ungodly and unrighteous; and, that they may be changed, as well as gathered out from a sinful and apostate race, he, whose work it is to accomplish these objects, must have power over the wicked as such. Nay, the ungodly may often be rendered instrumental in contributing to the interests of the church and people of God. The earth helps the woman, as Egypt supplied the children of Israel with support during the years of famine, and as Cyrus assisted the Jews in their return to their own land and the rebuilding of their temple. [Rev. 12.16.] The very enmity of the wicked may be overruled for the good of the righteous. ► Now, it is Christ who, in virtue of his

mediatorial power, thus establishes the wicked for correction, and makes the wrath of men to praise him. [Hab. 1.12; Psalm 76.10.] Even to restrain and keep back what would not be for the good of his chosen, the Redeemer must be possessed of such power. And, in addition to these, his power must be thus extensive, for the purpose of inflicting on the ungodly the punishment due to their sins. As the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son, it is his to 'make his enemies his footstool,' and to put into the hand of them that afflict his people 'the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of his fury.' [Isa. 51.22,23.] On all these accounts, there can be no greater mistake than to limit the Mediator's power to the members of the church, or to exclude any class of men whatever from his authority.

Enemies as well as friends are put under his feet:—'Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies' [Psalm 110.2.] Heathens as well as Christians are subject to his authority:—'The heathen are given to him for his inheritance;' 'He is head of the heathen.' [Psalm 2.8; 18.43.] Persons, in their civil not less than in their ecclesiastical capacity, are required to acknowledge his power:—'Be wise, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way.' [Psalm 2.10-12.] The dead, not less than the living, are under his control:—'For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.' [Rom. 14.9.] The wretched inhabitants of the pit, as much as those who are in heaven, feel his sway:—'He has the keys of hell and of death; he openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth.' [Rev 1.18; 3.7.] Among the human family, not one is exempted from the government of Messiah; none so high as to be beyond his reach, none so low as to be beneath his notice. He has power over all flesh.

4. Nor is it over men as individuals merely that Christ possesses power. His authority extends to *associations* of every description, domestic, civil, and ecclesiastical. The social principle is deeply lodged in the constitution of man, and makes its appearance in a thousand varied forms. Individuals, by forming themselves into societies, may make themselves powerful for good or evil, for purposes of aggression or defence. Societies, like persons, are under the government of God, and subject to the divine law. Bodies-politic or corporations are to be regarded as large moral subjects. To suppose that men, as individuals, are under the moral government of the Almighty, and bound to regulate their conduct by his law, but that, as societies, they are exempted from all such control, is to maintain what involves the most absurd and pernicious consequences. According to this, those who wish to free themselves from the restraints of moral obligation, have only to enter into alliance with one another,—they have only to band themselves together, to have their proud wish of independence fully gratified. This conclusion is too glaringly impious, not to shock every reflective mind. ► But if associations are under the moral government of God, and God has committed all government to the Son, it follows that associations are as much under the mediatorial sovereignty as individuals. Indeed it would not be difficult to shew, that no species of society can exist whose proceedings do not bear more or less directly on the interests of the Redeemer, so that, without having such under his control, he could not fully accomplish the ends for which he is invested

with the mediatorial character. While this is true of all associations, there are two, the church and the state, over which the mediatorial authority in a very particular manner extends. These are so important, both in themselves and in their relation to the subject now under discussion, that we must give to each a separate consideration afterwards.

5. But before leaving the present department, it is proper to remark that all the *dispensations of providence*, as well as the various departments of creation, are under the dominion of the Mediator. This is proved, not only by the universal language employed by the inspired writers when speaking of Christ's rule in general, but by the express terms of Scripture with reference to this particular subject, and also by the necessity of the thing itself. The vision of the wheels, in the first chapter of Ezekiel's prophecy, is generally understood to refer to the dispensations of divine providence in their nature, aspects, intricacy, and perfect consistency and wisdom. These dispensations were represented to the prophet as under the direction of one who sat upon a throne, and whose likeness was as 'the appearance of A MAN above upon it.' [Ezek. 1.26.] We are not left to doubt that 'the man Christ Jesus' is here meant, for it is afterwards said, 'This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of THE LORD.' ► We have here, then, an explicit proof from Scripture that the affairs of providence are managed by the Mediator: managed, too, with perfect wisdom, as indicated by the rings of the wheels being 'full of eyes round about;' and with special reference to the covenant of grace, as indicated by the appearance of the brightness being 'as the day of rain.' Indeed, the necessity of the thing requires that the Mediator's power be of such extent as to embrace all the affairs of providence. How, else, could he remove those obstacles which prevent the success of his gospel, and make way for the advancement of his spiritual kingdom? How, but for this, in a world in which 'there are many adversaries,' could 'a great door and effectual be opened up' to his servants in furthering his cause? [1 Cor. 16.9.] ► How, without this, would it be possible to render the train of events in operation at any time, subservient to the interests of the church? How could things merely secular, such as learning, and wealth, and the common relations of life, be ever ultimately Christianised, and have inscribed on them the motto *Holiness to the Lord*? Or how could the whole scheme of providential concerns be brought to that glorious consummation at the final judgment, to which it is his prerogative to bring it, seeing 'the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son'? [John 5.22.] It is *his*, in short, to open the seven-sealed book—to blow the seven trumpets—and to pour out the seven vials, in which all the events of divine providence toward the church and her enemies are comprehended. The measures of providence are best studied in the light of Calvary; and there is no surer key to the interpretation of the apocalyptic symbols than the Cross.

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He hath a donative Kingdom as Mediator, God and Man in one Person, unto which he was designed and appointed by God the Father, in the eternal Counsel of Peace, intimated in *Prov.* 8.23. *Luke* 22.29. The Ground-foundation and Charter of which Sovereignty is laid in that

Price and Ransom of inestimable Value, paid by him to Law and Justice, in the room and stead of his Body the Church, the given ones; and by virtue of which he obtained a just Right and title, not only of Conquest, but also of Purchase; over whom he sways a Sceptre of Grace, Love, and Peace; ruling by his Spirit in such Laws, Ordinances, and Institutions, as in infinite Wisdom are calculated for promoting the Glory and Honour of God, and for accomplishing their Edification and Salvation. ► This is his spiritual Kingdom, the Kingdom of the Covenant, that was to be raised out of the Rebel-world of Mankind, whereof Christ is constituted the alone King and Head, *Psalm* 2.6. Hence, he as Mediator presides in a special Manner in and over all the Ordinances and Administrations instituted by him within the Pale of the visible Church, which is his Spouse and Bride; while at the same Time, by a Right of Conquest over Hell and Death, and him that hath the Power of Death, the god of this World, and all the Powers of Darkness, triumphing openly over them in his Cross; even over these, and all their hellish Confederates, he rules with a Rod of Iron, baffling all their Stratagems, secret Plots and Machinations, dashing them to Pieces like a Potter's Vessel, or causing all these, by his wise and over-ruling Providence, work together for his own Glory, and the Good of them that love him. So that the Effects and Influences of his mediatorial Power and Government are diffused over all the Inhabitants of Heaven, Earth, and Hell. ► In Agreeableness to which, are the declared Sentiments of Dr. Owen, in these Words, "God the Father, in the Pursuit of the sovereign Purpose of his Will, hath granted unto the Son, as incarnate, and Mediator of the new Covenant, according to the eternal Counsel between them both, a sovereign Power and Authority over all Things in Heaven and Earth, with the Possession of an absolute Proprietor, to dispose of them at his Pleasure, for the Furtherance and Advancement of his proper and peculiar Work as Head of the Church." Hence it follows, that, in Subserviency to his spiritual Kingdom, his Church, the Administration of the Kingdom of Providence throughout the World is committed to him; being *made head over all things to the church, which is his body*, Eph. 1.22,23. ► *Zion's* King and Head manages all Things by his Providence, as well without as within the Church, though in a very different Way, as to his own People, and to Enemies in the midst of whom he rules, *Psalm* 110.2. Thus Christ's Lordship and Dominion extends to Reprobates as well as others. They are not exempted from that all Flesh which he hath Power over; though this universal Dominion is not exercised for their Good, but in behalf of his Saints. And it is not founded upon an universal Satisfaction, but upon two other Grounds. ► (1.) His Interposition upon the Entrance of Sin, against the immediate Execution of the Curse due unto it, as befell the Angels. This fixed the World under a Dispensation of Forbearance and Goodness. Which Dispensation is thus far on the Account of Christ, that though, as relating to Reprobates, the Favours they enjoy, are no Parts of his special Purchase as Mediator of the new Covenant; yet they are a necessary Consequent of his Interposition, against the immediate Execution of the whole Curse, upon the first Entrance of Sin, and of his Undertaking for his Elect, *Isa.* 49.8, *I will give thee for a Covenant of the people, to establish the earth.* *Psalm* 75.3. (2.) He makes a Conquest over them. It was promised, *Gen.* 3.15. He hath undertaken,

and will accomplish it, *1 Cor.* 15.21. And the Dominion granted him on these Grounds, as above, is sovereign, and absolute, and judiciary, *John* 5.22,23. As he hath Power over their Persons, so he hath Regard unto their Sins, *Acts* 17.32, *Matth.* 25.30,31, &c.

Discussion Questions

1. In what practical ways is it evident that the fallen spirits are subject to Christ the Mediator?
A.

2. In what two 'lights' or aspects might we properly regard the power possessed by the devil and his angels over the human race since our fall into sin?
A.

3. Could Satan have any power over man unless it were "given" to him?
A.

4. Are we then to view Satan as the authorized executioner of God's vengeance on man?
A.

5. In view of these considerations, what is necessary to the overthrow of Satan's power over man?
A.

6. Between inanimate creation on the one hand, and angelic intelligences on the other, who else are under the government of the mediatorial King?
A.

7. What are some practical examples of human power outside of the Church being exerted in the interest of Christ and his Church?
A.

8. What would be the absurd consequence if the power which Christ possesses over men as individuals did not also extend to men in their associations?
A.

9. Which of the prophets was privileged with a vision, and commissioned to exhibit to us, an astounding illustration of the Mediatorial King's exercise of power over the dispensations of providence? What was this vision?
A.