

MESSIAH THE PRINCE,
Or, The Mediatorial Dominion of Jesus Christ.
By William Symington.
Sabbath Afternoon Studies: Part 11.

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

Such is the varied proof, to which we invite attention, on the subject of the universal extent of the mediatorial rule. It embraces every thing animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, moral and immoral, individual and social;—every thing, in short, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. All things are put under his feet. He only is excepted who did put all things under him. To such an extent of mediatorial power, however, several OBJECTIONS have been started.

1. One of these objections, founded on the spirituality of Christ's kingdom, has already been obviated. But, it may be said that such an extent of dominion as we have supposed to belong to the Son as Mediator, tends to *exclude the Father and the Holy Spirit from the government of all things*. By no means. However mysterious in itself and difficult to be explained, the fact is not to be denied that the work of one person of the Godhead, in any department of operation, does not preclude that of the others; creation, providence, and grace being alike ascribed in Scripture to each. The inspired writers represent the Father and the Son, accordingly, as occupying the same throne:—'Even as I am set down with my Father in his throne,'—'the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it,' [Rev. 3.21; 22.3.] ► Nor can it fail to strike an intelligent person that the very same mode of reasoning might be directed against the Saviour's dominion over the church. If the circumstance of the government of *the world* at large being vested in the Son goes to exclude the Father and the Spirit from the dominion of all things, it will follow that the circumstance of the dominion of the *church* being vested in the Son, must, on the same principle, go to exclude the Father and the Spirit from all control over the church. And, if the management of the church may be delegated to the Son without interfering with the essential right of dominion belonging to the other persons of the Trinity, why not also the management of all things besides? If a part may be delegated without annulling the right of the other persons to dominion over that part, why may not the whole, without annulling their right of dominion over the whole?

2. It has also been supposed to *confound the essential and the mediatorial rule of Christ*. In confirmation of, and in addition to, what was formerly observed on this point, it may here be

remarked that there may be a formal distinction where there is a material identity. The same thing may be viewed in different aspects. Things, the same in themselves, may be viewed as under the dominion of Christ both essentially as God and officially as Mediator. In the latter case, they are invested with a new power, and directed to a new end. He is not only 'head over all things,' but 'head over all things *to the church* which is his body.' [Eph. 1.22-23.] ► In the order of God's creatures, the lower are subordinate to the higher, and the highest include all that are under them. Things natural are subordinate to things moral, and things moral to things gracious; but the interests of those things which are gracious necessarily suppose the subordination both of those that are natural and of those that are moral. Thus the two latter classes, which are under the Son essentially considered, must, for the sake of the former class, which is under him officially, be placed under him officially too. The result of the whole, then, is that the essential and the mediatorial dominions of Christ, so far from being subversive the one of the other, are absolutely commensurate and perfectly harmonious; yet not so blended as to destroy the distinctive character of either.

3. It has been thought an objection to our doctrine that, if Christ be possessed of such an extent of official power, it must *lay foundation for the ascription of divine honours to him as Mediator*. He who rules over all is certainly entitled to the homage of all. But, so far from believing that divine honours should not be paid to Christ as Mediator, we are at a loss to see to what evil it can possibly give rise, or how, indeed, it can be avoided. His divine and his mediatorial characters are, it is true, distinct. That is to say, we can suppose the former without the latter. But it is carefully to be observed that we cannot suppose the latter without the former. His divinity is essential to his mediatorship. He could not have been Mediator unless he had been God. He is a Divine Mediator. ► Apart from his divinity, his mediatorial character is not only without validity, but without being,—a mere figment of imagination. Where, then, lies the danger of ascribing divine honours to the Mediator? Was it not as Mediator that the disciples, in the days of his flesh, fell down and worshipped him? Is it not as the Lamb slain, that every creature in heaven is represented as ascribing to him blessing, and honour, and glory, and power? And might not the payment of divine honours to the Father, viewed as *Creator* or *Preserver*, be as reasonably objected to, as the ascription of divine glory to the Son as *Mediator*? The former characters are not more essential to the being of God than the latter; or rather they are all alike non-essential. God might have existed without assuming the character of Creator or Preserver, as well as the Son without taking to himself that of Mediator. This last is not more the result of an act of divine will than the others; and if these, as is admitted, do not preclude but call for divine homage, why should not this?

4. It is equally inconclusive to maintain, that such an extent of mediatorial dominion must suppose *the wicked to be somehow interested in the work of Christ, and partakers of the benefits of his death*. We appeal, in reply, to what is matter of fact; we have already shown, that there are many things under the power of Christ besides those which are the immediate objects of his purchase. Angels, devils, reprobate men, and things irrational and inanimate, are all put under the feet of the Mediator: yet not one of these can be said to have been redeemed by his

blood. There are some benefits enjoyed by the wicked of the world, which, as they result from the mediatorial economy, may be said to be, indirectly at least, the fruits of Christ's death. Such is the case with the divine forbearance, with temporal favours, and with the outward dispensation of gospel ordinances, of which the wicked partake, but which, but for the scheme of salvation, they could never have enjoyed. ► It is, however, not more difficult to account for such things, than to understand how a general reprieve, and temporary support, may be conferred by an earthly prince on a whole body of traitors, for the sake of some whom it is his design to rescue from the danger that impends them all. 'And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.' 'Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all' [Gen. 18.23; Isa. 65.8.] Nor is it irrelevant, here, to advert to the distinction betwixt things viewed simply in themselves, and viewed as blessed by God. The things themselves may be enjoyed when the blessing of heaven is withheld. ► In the case of temporal benefits, it is, properly speaking, the blessing that springs directly from the mediation of Christ; the things themselves spring from it only indirectly. Things which flow from the natural goodness of God, it will be allowed, were forfeited by sin; and, if so, they can be restored only through the Mediator. It is commanded, 'Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' We are instructed to pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' It is said of the believer, 'Bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure.' We are also assured that 'Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.'¹ ► Now, it may be asked, to which covenant, the covenant of works or that of grace, do these promises and assurances respecting temporal mercies belong? Not surely to the covenant of works, for, through this medium, no good can come to fallen man; the curse is all that he can receive from this source. But if they belong to the covenant of grace, they must have some connexion with the death of Christ, by which this covenant is ratified. The things, viewed in themselves, flow, we admit, from the natural goodness of God, and so may be participated in by more than the saints; yet, viewed as blessed by God, that is, as real blessings, they are to be regarded as flowing from the blood of Christ, by which they are secured, redeemed, and sanctified, for the use of his own people. Nor can it be any more a valid objection to Christ's headship over all things, that the wicked are thus supposed to enjoy temporal benefits, than it is to his headship over the church, that the wicked as well as others enjoy access to the ordinances of the gospel and the means of grace.

5. After all, it may be thought that the doctrine of Christ's universal mediatorial supremacy is at variance with fact. 'We see not yet all things put under him.' Devils and wicked men do not acknowledge his authority, or respond to his claims. But his *right* and *title* are unaffected by this circumstance. In the kingdom of a rightful sovereign, there may be rebels. If this

1 Matt. 6.25,33; 6.11; Isa. 33.16; 1 Tim. 4.8.

objection were of weight against Christ's dominion over all things, it would bear with equal force against his power over the church, inasmuch as, unquestionably, many of those who are included in this department, are yet unsubdued and in arms against his authority. Nay, it would go to exclude the Almighty himself from the rule of the universe; for many there are who refuse to acknowledge or respect his moral government. The reign of the Mediator, however, is not yet ended; in the exercise of the undoubted right he possesses, he is carrying forward the purposes for which it has been conferred. We have only to wait with patience, till he has put down all rule, and all authority and power, and then shall it appear that the Father hath put all things in subjection under his feet, having left nothing which is not put under him.

How delightful the principle thus established and vindicated! It reflects the glory of Christ, on whose head are many crowns. He appears, wearing, not only the crown of dominion over the church, but that of dominion over the kingdoms of nature, providence, and grace—over things physical and moral, rational and irrational, animate and inanimate. Things in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, are thus seen to be put under his feet. His kingdom ruleth over all. Ye saints of the Most High! ascribe to him the glory that is due. Be not afraid or ashamed to affirm his universal sovereignty. Who would wish to rob him of any one of his crowns, or to see him excluded from any part of his dominions? If some have seemed to do so theoretically, let us hope that it has arisen more from mistaken conception or party prejudice than from real opposition to his honour. ► This is not a mere speculative matter; it affects the perfection of the Redeemer's character. So much so, that, without such extent of power as is supposed, he could not be our Redeemer at all. To the salvation of men, he must be invested with power, not only over such as are saved, but over such as are *to be* saved; he must possess a right to bring them under the influence of means, as well as to render the means efficacious;—a right to subordinate every thing in nature and providence to the accomplishment of this high and glorious undertaking. To limit or restrict the mediatorial rule is thus clearly subversive of the Saviour's glory.

This view of things is fraught with comfort to saints. To such it cannot but afford strong consolation, to know that their Mediator has power over angels, and can employ these celestial beings in watching over them, communicating to them ideas, affording them protection, and transporting them, when they die, to the land of bliss. When assailed by satanic temptations, it must be matter of joyful reflection to the people of God, to know that Christ has dominion over infernal spirits, and can limit and restrain, and overrule for good, all their operations; that they can have no power over these except as it is given them by him; that the power they possess is entirely under his control; and that he possesses the right and the ability, as he stands pledged, to destroy in the end all the works of the devil. ► As the disciple of Christ looks abroad upon the field of nature, how pleasing the reflection, that it is his Saviour who upholds all things by the word of his power, causing the sun to shine, the stars to twinkle, the rain to fall, the earth to vegetate, and food to spring from it for man and beast! Every thing in nature is thus invested with a new beauty, and reflects a brighter splendour to the eye of the Christian, from being

placed under the management of his Lord and Saviour. As the wheels of providence revolve, however high their bearing and intricate their movements, he can behold them with perfect calmness and security, knowing, as he does, that they are all under the infallible guidance of the God-man Mediator, who occupies the throne which is above the firmament. In short, in whatever situation he may be placed, or whatever view of things he may be led to take, nothing can afford to the believer greater consolation and joy, than the reflection that all are under the power of him who is the Saviour of his soul.

Not less calculated is the subject we are considering, to appal the hearts of the enemies of Christ. In virtue of his universal dominion, he can break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. [Psalm 2.9.] His Father has said to him, 'Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.' [Psalm 110.2.] To such as are in a state of rebellion against him, it may well be said, 'Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.' [Psalm 2.12.] He has at his command infinite resources of torture, dismay, and ruin. You who are his enemies! think how he can send out your fellow-rebels against you; can scourge you with providential calamities; or let loose legions of infernal spirits to torment and devour you. ► Think how he swept away the Antediluvians with the flood; how he drowned the Egyptians in the waters of the Red Sea; how he overthrew in succession the heathen monarchies; and how he poured destruction on the guilty inhabitants of Judea. As Lord of all, he can make all things the instruments of his vengeance. He must reign till all his enemies be made his footstool. How much better, by timely submission, to be elevated to his throne, than, by obstinate hostility, to be trodden for ever under his feet! You have before you the alternative. Choose ye that which is good. He extends to sinners the golden sceptre of his grace. Let them tremble at the thought of being exposed eternally to 'the wrath of the Lamb' for refusing to touch it. [Rev. 6.16.]

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<p>Matthew 14:33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.</p>	<p>οἱ δὲ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ ἐλθόντες προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ λέγοντες· ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱὸς εἶ.</p>
<p>Matthew 28:17-18 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.</p>	<p>καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ, οἱ δὲ ἐδίστασαν. καὶ προσελθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς λέγων· ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς.</p>
<p>Luke 24:51-52 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.</p>	<p>καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ εὐλογεῖν αὐτὸν αὐτοὺς διέστη ἀπ' αὐτῶν καὶ ἀνεφέρετο εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν. καὶ αὐτοὶ προσκυνήσαντες αὐτὸν ὑπέστρεψαν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ μετὰ χαρᾶς μεγάλης.</p>

Discussion Questions

1. Are the Father and Holy Spirit excluded from the government of all things, by ascribing universal dominion to Christ as Mediator?

A.

2. How may we answer those who assert that the *essential* and *mediatorial* rule of Christ are confounded by making the latter universal?

A.

3. If it is complained that the universality of the dominion of Christ as Mediator will serve to lay a foundation for ascribing divine honors to him in this capacity, what answer should be given?

A.

4. Does the universality of Christ's dominion as Mediator somehow make the wicked partakers of the benefits of his death?

A.

5. Observing that the reprobate, with the elect, share in many outward benefits which have been forfeited by their sins, can this work of divine condescension be ascribed to the Covenant of Works?

A.

6. Is Christ's "universal mediatorial supremacy" a mere theoretical at variance with observable facts?

A.

7. Why is it inadequate to regard Christ as having power only over those who are saved?

A.

8. For the saints, what use may be found in this doctrine of Christ's universal power as Mediator?

A.

9. For unbelievers, what use may be found in this doctrine?

A.