

MESSIAH THE PRINCE,
Or, The Mediatorial Dominion of Jesus Christ.
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Sabbath Afternoon Studies: Part 6.

CHAPTER 5.
THE SPIRITUALITY OF CHRIST'S
MEDIATORIAL DOMINION.

THE subjects which have hitherto engaged our attention may be viewed as preliminary. The necessity, reality, qualifications, and appointment of Christ's kingly office, prepare the way for an inquiry into the *nature* of the mediatorial dominion itself. This we are now to consider. Nor can it be more clearly expressed than by saying, in one word, that the government of the Son of God, as Mediator, is strictly and properly *spiritual*. His kingdom is not an earthly or temporal kingdom, like the kingdoms of this world. It has a higher origin; it interferes, in no respect, with the exercise of lawful civil authority; and the means by which its advancement is effected are different from those which the rulers of this world employ.

1. The *origin* of the mediatorial dominion illustrates its distinction, in respect of spirituality, from the kingdoms of this world. These all originate in what is natural. Lawful civil authority in general, is, doubtless, an ordinance of God; but, as respects the immediate origin of each individual kingdom, it is an ordinance of man. Whether taking rise from the elective power of the people, from hereditary succession, from conquest, or from usurpation, dominion among men is natural in its origin. To some the crown descends by lineal succession from ancestors from whose heads it has just been displaced by the hand of death. Others have the sceptre bestowed on them by the unconstrained suffrage and cheerful acclamation of a free and happy people. ► Others, again, establishing right by might, assert their claims by the power of the sword, wade to sovereignty through seas of blood, and mount to the throne on the slaughtered bodies of the men whom they seek to govern. It is otherwise far with the dominion of which we are now treating. The crown of our Mediatorial King was worn by no other; he is its original and exclusive possessor. He enjoys, it is true, the welcome of his spiritual subjects, but this is the result of his administration, and not the source of his authority; and, although blood be connected with the establishment of his reign, it is not the blood of his subjects or enemies, but his own blood, the very shedding of which presupposes an existing right to rule and act as a king. ► His dominion originates solely in immediate divine appointment, in the spiritual grant of his Father from all everlasting in the covenant of grace. *My Father hath appointed unto me a kingdom.* To such an origin, no kingdom of this world can lay claim; to such a grant, no

monarch among men can pretend. These are of the 'earth, earthy;' this is 'from above.' *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.* [John 3.35.]

2. The *ends* contemplated by this dominion are spiritual. The immediate ends for which kingdoms are set up among men, are of course worldly ends. The administration of public justice, the preservation of peace, the advancement of morals, and the establishment of social order, are immediately contemplated by civil authority. These, right and proper in themselves, are different from, and inferior to, the ends of Christ's mediatorial dominion. Those bear a closer relation to the value of the soul, the greatness of the human mind, the vastness of human desires, the immortal destiny of man. To give light to them that are in spiritual darkness, to rescue from the tyranny of sinful passions, to purge the conscience from dead works, to renovate the heart, to sanctify the life, to swallow up death in victory, and to shut the mouth of the infernal abyss,—in one word to save the soul, is the grand end of the mediatorial dominion. ► A worldly kingdom has to do with the lives and property of men, that of Christ with their hearts and consciences. The one has a respect to their interests in the world that now is, the other to those in the world that is to come. The one aims at making men good subjects, the other at making them true saints. The ends contemplated by the kingdoms of this world terminate in time, but those contemplated by the dominion of the Mediator point forward to, and can be consummated only in, an eternal state of being. Not but that earthly dominion may be so conducted as to subserve the interests of the soul and of eternity, just as the dominion of the Mediator cannot but produce the temporal interests and social advantages of mankind; but we speak now, not of the collateral or indirect tendencies of each, but of their direct and immediate ends,—which are in the one case worldly, and in the other spiritual. 'For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost.' [Rom. 14.17.]

3. The *administration* of Christ's kingdom is spiritual. It is administered, as are the kingdoms of this world, by office-bearers, government, and laws; but these are of a character different from those which obtain in other cases. Here, the officers are not persons invested with magisterial authority, and armed with civil weapons; but pastors and teachers, elders and deacons, endowed with ministerial authority, whose weapons are not carnal but spiritual. The government and discipline they administer address themselves to the understandings, and hearts, and consciences of men; they aim at something more than laying restraints, as civil government does, on the persons and overt acts of men; their object is to influence the motives of action and to restrain the inward passions of the soul. ► The ministers, to whom the management of this government is committed, are made overseers by the Holy Ghost. They assume no right, like civil rulers, to enact, command, or enjoin in their own name; they are 'not lords over God's heritage.' [1 Pet. 5.3.] When they issue their counsels, it is in the name of the Lord, being prefaced with 'Thus saith the Lord' or 'It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay upon you these necessary things.' They claim not to have dominion over their people's faith, but to be helpers of their joy. [2 Cor. 1.24.] Instead of the stern voice of authority, which,

at the peril of property, liberty, or life, must be obeyed, they appeal to the law and to the testimony, and invite a strict scrutiny of whatever they utter. *We speak as unto wise men, judge ye what we say.* [Isa. 8.20; 1 Cor. 10.15.] ► They claim no power over the persons or purses of men. The penalties they denounce are not fines, imprisonment, and death. They bear not the *sword*; but, entrusted with the *keys* of the kingdom of heaven, view it as their prerogative to ‘open or shut’ the doors of ecclesiastical privilege, according to character. [Matt. 16.19.] Instruction and advice, censure and remonstrance, are the only weapons they feel themselves at liberty to employ. They reprove, rebuke, exhort with all authority. [2 Tim. 4.2.] When repeated admonition has failed to produce the desired effect, they reject, [Titus 3.10]; when milder measures have proved insufficient, they proceed in the name of the Lord Jesus to deliver over the offender to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, [1 Cor. 5.5]: but physical violence they may never use, to produce a constrained submission. The conscience, with which alone they have to do, cannot be influenced by fire or steel. Standing armies, well-stored magazines, swords, and muskets, form no part of their equipments. No. ‘If my kingdom,’ says Christ, ‘were of this world, then would my servants fight: but now is my kingdom not from hence.’ [John 18.36.] ► The instruments, the use of which He recognises as legitimate, are:—the *Bible*; the word of God which is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, the sword of the spirit, the sharp two-edged sword which goeth out of the mouth of him who is Alpha and Omega, [Heb. 4.12; Eph. 6.17; Rev. 1.16, 11]:—the *Cross*; the preaching of which is the most effectual means of turning men from darkness to light, of thinning the ranks of Satan, and increasing the number of true adherents to the Captain of Salvation:—the *example* of Him who is the great pattern of perfection, whose contempt of the world appeared in that he ‘had not where to lay his head;’ his meekness, in ‘bearing the contradiction of sinners;’ his patience, in that ‘when he was reviled he reviled not again;’ and his active benevolence, in continually ‘going about doing good.’ [Matt. 8.20; Heb. 12.3; 1 Pet. 2.23; Acts 10.38.] These, under the hallowed influence of the Holy Spirit of all grace, are the means of enlightening, renewing, sanctifying, and consoling men, and of thus bringing them to be, and qualifying them to act as, subjects of Christ’s spiritual kingdom. 2 Cor. 10.4: ‘For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong-holds.’ Zech. 4.6: ‘Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.’

4. The *principles* of Christ’s kingdom are spiritual principles. It disclaims all sympathy with the maxims on which the governments of this world are too often administered: maxims which are, not seldom, infidel, fallacious, and ungrateful. Instead of the common and pernicious sentiment, that personal virtues are not necessary in public men, it is an established maxim here that ‘he that ruleth over men must be just,’ and that trust is to be committed only to ‘faithful men.’ [2 Sam. 23.3; 2 Tim. 2.2.] Instead of supposing that, if the laws of the nation are only understood and acted upon by men in power, it matters not how much the law of God is overlooked and contemned, it is provided that rulers shall have a copy of the law, and shall read in it continually. [Deut. 17.18-19.] ► Instead of regarding it as a matter of inferior moment how much private wickedness may abound in a land, provided only that public tranquillity and

obedience to the laws can be preserved, it is a first principle that ‘righteousness exalteth a nation, and that sin is a disgrace to any people.’ [Prov. 14.34.] In the kingdoms of the world it is a principle too much acted upon, that a state of warfare warrants us to treat an enemy without pity, sincerity, or even humanity; but, in the kingdom of Christ, it is an immutable law that ‘all things whatsoever we would that men should do to us, we should do even so to them.’ [Matt. 7.12.] But there is no end to the contrast; the longer it is pursued it becomes not more evident that ‘the kingdom of Christ is not of this world,’ than that ‘the kingdoms of this world’ are *not yet* ‘the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.’

5. In short, almost *every thing* connected with this kingdom is spiritual. The King himself is no worldly prince, but the Lord from heaven, who is a quickening spirit. The subjects are a spiritual community, consisting of persons who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit as an essential and indispensable qualification to their admission; for ‘except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’ [John 3.3.] The laws by which they are governed are spiritual laws, which take cognisance of the heart. ► The homage paid to the sovereign Lord, instead of vain and empty ceremonies, consists in the sincere and pious devotion of the soul. His throne is such as no king of this earth ever occupied, an eternal heavenly throne; ‘thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.’ His sceptre is a righteous sceptre, even the rod of strength sent out of Zion, by which he rules in the midst of his enemies. His courtiers are not those who, by intriguing complacence and mean arts of adulation, contrive to bask in the sunshine of royal favour, but ‘whosoever shall do the will of his Father, who is in heaven.’ His attendant retinue is composed, not of fawning sycophants and feigned friends, but of the immortal sons of light, angels and archangels ten thousand strong.

Thus, in whatever light we contemplate it, the spirituality of Christ’s kingdom stands forth as a prominent and well-established feature. Nor is it possible not to be impressed with the affecting confirmation this view of the matter received from his appearance on earth. He steadfastly resisted every attempt to invest him with the attributes of an earthly sovereign. ‘When Jesus perceived that they would come and take him by force to make him a king, he departed into a mountain himself alone.’ [John 6.15.] With temporal aggrandisement and the showy trappings of royalty, he would have nothing to do. ► The only occasion on which he enjoyed anything approaching to a triumphal procession, was when he entered into Jerusalem, and then he rode upon an ass. The only robe of office, in which he was ever arrayed, was a cast-off military cloak, thrown around him by his enemies in derision of his regal claims. The only sceptre he ever handled was a reed. The only diadem, he ever wore, was a crown of thorns. For a throne he had assigned him a cross. And the homage offered him by the men of the world, consisted only in pointing at him with the finger of scorn, spitting on him, and striking him with the palms of their hands. Well mightest thou say, O Jesus! ‘My kingdom is not of this world.’ [John 18.36.]

===== SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL FOLLOWS =====

From the Commentary of George Hutcheson on John 18.35,36.

“Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.”

Albeit Christ’s kingdom be in the world, yet it is not of the world; not only in respect of the subjects, who ought not to be of the world, but chiefly in opposition to worldly kingdoms; the benefits thereof not being earthly, Romans 14.17, it being managed in a spiritual way, and with spiritual weapons, 2 Cor. 10.4, and coming without external pomp and observation, like unto the kingdoms of the world, Luke 17.20,21; for so much is imported in this assertion, “My kingdom is not of this world,” whereby he removeth all cause of fear in Pilate.

It is the property of Christ’s subjects and servants to be affectionate to their Lord and Master, and to be ready to do whatsoever is lawful for the good of his kingdom; for so is imported in that his servants would fight if it had been warrantable. And hereof all made offer, and Peter gave a rash proof, as we heard on verse 10.

It is an evidence that Christ’s kingdom is spiritual, that it is carried on, not by force of arms, as worldly kingdoms are, but by spiritual means; therefore doth Christ confirm his assertion (not by scripture, which Pilate knew not, but) by that known instance, “If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews.” Whereas private men, aspiring to a worldly kingdom, do use violence and force of arms, he had prohibited his disciples to fight in his defence in the garden. This is not to be understood as if Christ disallowed that they to whom he hath given the sword should defend his kingdom therewith; for if magistrates, even as magistrates, should be nursing parents to the church, and ought to kiss the Son, as the scriptures do record, then certainly they may and should employ their power as magistrates for removing of idolatry and setting up the true worship of God, and for defending thereof against violence. But Christ’s purpose and scope in this may be fully taken up in these:—1. Christ, in his present state of humiliation, came into the world, not to get visible powers on his side, but to abase himself and suffer, Matt. 20.28; and to this the words in the text relate, while it is said, they did not fight, “that I should not be delivered to the Jews;” but in his state of exaltation he hath given, and will give, more ample proofs of his power, even in crushing kings and potentates, who oppose him and his kingdom, Psalm 2.9,10,12; 110.5,6, (which is sometimes brought to pass by war,) and in employing the kings of the earth to hate the whore and burn her with fire, Rev. 17.16. ... 4. Whatever case may warrant fighting in defence of religion, yet the influence thereof is but very accidental, as to this great end of promoting the spiritual kingdom of Christ; for not only did the gospel overspread much of the world by the preaching and sufferings of professors, before magistrates did befriend it, but even their power, when it is employed, can but reach to set up the outward exercise of religion, and

to the repelling of external force, but can, itself alone, do nothing to the conscience, or to the keeping out of Satan, which is effectuated only by Christ's spirit accompanying and blessing his own spiritual weapons.

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Discussion Questions

1. With what does the spiritual kingdom of Christ in no way interfere?
 - A. "It interferes, in no respect, with the exercise of lawful civil authority."
2. If lawful civil authority is itself an ordinance of God, in what way is the mediatorial dominion to be regarded as having a different origin?
 - A. It has a different origin because even with lawful civil authority, particular governments have their origin in particular human plans and agreements, but the crown of Jesus Christ comes to him as the exclusive possessor, rightfully possessed thereof by divine appointment alone.
3. How do the *ends* or *aims* of Christ's spiritual kingdom vary from those of earthly kingdoms?
 - A. The latter are concerned with the property of men and the administration of public justice, but the former, being spiritual, is concerned with matters of the soul and the immortal destiny of man. Earthly kingdoms aim to be perpetuated, yet their ends terminate with the things of time. Christ's kingdom aims at the eternal state.
4. What are the spiritual devices used for the administration of Christ's kingdom?
 - A. These include his spiritual office-bearers, exercising a government and discipline addressed to the understandings, hearts, and consciences of men.
5. What penalties are to be made use of in Christ's kingdom, if not fines, imprisonment, and death?
 - A. In his kingdom there is not the use of the *sword*, but of the *keys*: an opening and shutting of the doors of ecclesiastical privilege according to men's character.
6. What weapons or instruments are used by the kingdom of Christ, in reducing the kingdoms of the world to yield subjection to Messiah, if not swords and muskets?
 - A. Chiefly the Bible, as well as the Cross, and the example of Christ, being blessed with the influences of the Holy Ghost.
7. What is the difference between the principles of an earthly kingdom and the spiritual kingdom of Christ?
 - A. Earthly kingdoms often operate on maxims which are infidel and erroneous, but Christ's kingdom prevails on principles which recognize the importance of holiness, and train his subjects to harmlessness and goodness.
8. How are the laws of Christ's kingdom different from the laws of earthly governments?
 - A. The laws of Christ's kingdom are "spiritual laws, which take cognisance of the heart."
9. Do we find any evidences in the Gospel that Jesus would personally delight in temporal wealth or visible displays of royalty and magnificence among men?
 - A. There is no such evidence. Rather, he resisted men's efforts to make him a king, and plainly owned that his kingdom was "not of this world."