

MESSIAH THE PRINCE,
Or, The Mediatorial Dominion of Jesus Christ.
By William Symington.
Sabbath Afternoon Studies: Part 8.

CHAPTER 6.
THE UNIVERSALITY OF CHRIST'S
MEDIATORIAL RULE.

THE topic on which we are now to descant is of great importance, yet it is one on which much misconception exists. There are some who deny the fact altogether; and there are others, who, though compelled to admit the fact, have most inadequate ideas of the place which it is entitled to hold in estimating the offices of the Mediator. There is one short clause, in the writings of the Apostle Paul, which both these classes would do well to consider. It is that in which, speaking of Christ's exaltation by the Father, he uses the expression, 'AND GAVE HIM TO BE HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH' (Eph. 1.22)—language which asserts at once the unlimited extent of the mediatorial power, and the high and glorious end for which such power has been conferred.

1. The connexion of Christ's universal power with the honour awarded him by the Father for the work of man's redemption, is sufficient to attest its IMPORTANCE. That which entered into the stipulations of the eternal covenant, and which occupied the mind of the Saviour throughout the whole period of his sufferings, his last mysterious agony not even excepted, cannot be deemed a matter of inferior moment. Now, we are assured, that 'for the joy set before him he endured the cross' (Heb. 12.2); and that this joy included that of which we are speaking, the language of the same inspired writer clearly imports, 'He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth' (Phil. 2.8,10.) —► Besides, the doctrine of his universal supremacy was one of the last things which Christ taught his disciples. Just before his ascension, in the concluding interview he held with his apostles on earth, in which surely nothing but what is of the highest importance could find a place, he said, 'ALL power is given unto me in heaven and on earth' (Matt. 28.18.)—Moreover, the possession of universal power must, on a moment's reflection, appear to be intimately connected with the interests of the church. Power beyond the church, is essential to the existence, increase, and welfare of the church itself. That the members of his mystical body may be complete in him, he must have dominion over all principalities and powers. The overthrow of the church's foes, the fulfilment of the church's prospects, and the final victory of every member over death and the grave, suppose him to rule with uncontrollable sway in the

midst of his enemies. 'For he must reign till all enemies be put under his feet' (1 Cor. 15.25.)—
► These things may be sufficient to convince the unprejudiced mind, of the vast importance of the feature of the Mediator's kingly office of which we are now to treat. But, should there still remain a single sceptical doubt on the reader's mind, it cannot fail to be removed when he is reminded that the fact of Christ's universal reign enters into the praises of heaven, and is echoed from the arches of the celestial temple. 'And I heard,' says John, 'the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto the Lamb for ever and ever. Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth' (Rev. 5.15; 19.6.)

2. No doctrine in Scripture is supported by clearer or more abundant EVIDENCE than the universality of Christ's mediatorial supremacy. Before exhibiting the passages in which it is expressly affirmed, it may be proper to state, that what determines that the passages in question refer to the mediatorial, and not to the essential, kingdom of the Son of God, is the circumstance that the power spoken of in these passages is said to be *given* him. His essential authority can in no sense be said to be *given*. That which is delegated, conferred by gift, bestowed by another, can belong to him only as Mediator. ► Nor is it necessary that the territory over which the sovereignty is exercised by inherent right, and that over which it is exercised by delegated authority, should be actually different in matter or extent. They may in reality be the same in substance, and of course equal in extent; the difference consisting in this, that the kingdom over which he, as the Son of God, rules by inherent and original right, he, as Mediator, is authorised to manage and direct for a new end, namely, the salvation of men, and the best interests of the church. His investiture with mediatorial authority, thus means his having had conferred on him a right to employ the power, which he always possessed as God, for the specific objects of his mediatorial work. The essential and the mediatorial kingdoms of Christ may, therefore, be co-extensive; and we need not wonder to find the inspired writers ascribing the gift of universal power to Him whose essential dominion is absolute and unlimited. These things premised, we are prepared to look at the Scripture proof for the universality of the mediatorial dominion.

'All things are delivered unto me of my Father.' [Matt. 11.27.] These are the words of Christ to his disciples. The connexion shews that it is of his mediatorial power he is speaking, as it is in this character that he is said to know and to be known by the Father, and to reveal the Father to others. The very word 'delivered' carries in it the same idea, as his power as God is not delivered to him, but essentially and intrinsically possessed. Now, the affirmation respects universal power—'all things,' πάντα — no exception being so much as hinted at.

'And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.' [Matt. 28.18.] This is, if possible, still more decided. Here, as in the former instance, both the context, which relates to the apostolical commission, and the language itself, 'given,' shew that the mediatorial character is meant. And, as to the extent of what he attributes to

himself in this character, the words are, ‘All power in heaven and in earth’—*πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς*—expressive of universality in the largest sense.

To the same purpose are the words of Peter in his discourse at Cesarea. Speaking of Jesus Christ in connexion with the peace which is preached through him, and of course as Mediator, he says, in an emphatic parenthesis—‘He is Lord of all,’ *πάντων Κύριος* [Acts 10.36.] The term ‘Lord’ denotes authoritative power, and the ‘all’ may be either persons, or things, or both.

‘And hath put ALL things (*παντα*) under his feet, and gave him to be head over ALL things (*παντα*) to the church.’ [Eph. 1.22.] The terms ‘put’ and ‘gave’ mark, with sufficient precision, the character in which Christ is here spoken of by the apostle, while the extent of grant is abundantly explicit.

Not less decisive is the language of the same inspired writer in another epistle:—‘And ye are complete in him which is the head of ALL principality and power,’ *ἡ κεφαλὴ πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας*. [Col. 2.10.]

‘For he hath *put* ALL things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him; it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him.’ [1 Cor. 15.27.] This is the only instance in which an exception is stated to the universality of the mediatorial dominion; and the exception strengthens greatly our position. The only exception stated is the Father, who confers on him the mediatorial dominion; and the specifying of this shews that there is not another, proves that the mediatorial dominion embraces everything in the universe but God.

One more direct Scripture proof may suffice. And it is of such a character, that, had there not been another in the Bible, it were itself sufficient. Its phraseology seems purposely framed, to place it beyond the power of any one to find a plausible pretext for setting the slightest limit to the official dominion of the Son of God. ‘But one, in a certain place, testified saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the Son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: thou hast put ALL things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, HE LEFT NOTHING THAT IS NOT PUT UNDER HIM.’ [Heb. 2.6-8.] The reference is to the eighth Psalm. The purpose for which the words of the Psalm are quoted by the apostle, shews that it is the Messiah who is spoken of. The universality of dominion ascribed, cannot be affirmed of man in the ordinary sense of the term; other worlds and angels not being made subject to *him*. Besides, a part of the Psalm is applied elsewhere to the Redeemer. [Matt. 21.15,16.]

Here, then, we have ample proof in support of our position, to which every believer in the Scriptures must pay respect. We can conceive of nothing more decisive or complete. Nothing but the blinding influence of prejudice, interest, or error, can account for such plain testimony being resisted. Whatever some may find it convenient to maintain, it is clear that neither Christ nor his apostles entertained the most distant thought of the mediatorial power being limited, but that they rejoiced in the truth that ‘his kingdom ruleth over all.’

3. It might be added, that every thing which renders the mediatorial dominion necessary at all, requires it to be of universal extent. It could easily be shewn that, to the fulfilment of the purposes of the divine will respecting the elect—to the completion of Christ's character as a Saviour—to his being fitly rewarded for his obedience unto the death—as well to his successful overthrow of his enemies, nothing less than universal power could suffice. But these things are so palpable, that to dwell upon them at length would be only to weaken their force. It will serve a better purpose to CLASSIFY and particularise some of the 'all things' that are put under Christ's feet.

Inanimate and *irrational* creation is placed under the Mediator. 'Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of sea.' [Psalm 8.6-8.] This passage is, as we have seen, quoted in the epistle to the Hebrews, with express application to Jesus Christ. [Heb. 2.6-9.] The objects specified are the inferior parts of creation, but of these there is no exception. The language comprehends matter in every form, organised and unorganised: the planetary bodies in general, the earth with its water and dry land in particular, the mineral kingdom, and the vegetable world, are all included in 'the works of God's hands:' while inferior animals of every tribe are expressly enumerated,—'the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea.' ► Nor was it unnecessary that the mediatorial grant should embrace such particulars as these. Far from it. The material world owes its preservation to this circumstance. It is the Mediator who 'upholds all things by the word of his power.' [Heb. 1.3.] But for the dispensation of divine mercy of which this earth is the theatre, we have no reason to believe that it would have survived the fall. This is the grand conservative element by which it is enabled to withstand the destructive tendency of the dreadful penalty denounced on man's disobedience. When the guilty pair put forth their hands, plucked the forbidden fruit, and ate,—

'Earth felt the wound; and Nature from her seat,
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe
That all was lost.
Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
In pangs; and Nature gave a second groan;
Sky lowered, and muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal sin
Original.'¹

► But, while clouds obscure the horizon, and thunders roll in tremendous peals amongst the sky, while the earth quakes to its very centre, and everything portends immediate and inevitable destruction; when the earth, and the inhabitants thereof, are about to be dissolved, the divine Mediator steps forth, grasps it with his almighty hand, and 'bears up the pillars of it.' [Psalm 75.3.] Without this interposition, the interests of the church at large could not have been

1 Paradise Lost, book 9.

subservied, either in the way of protection or of propagation; nor could her members individually have been fed, clothed, and preserved, or their bodies have been raised up at the last day.

With regard to the *inferior animals*, the right of dominion over them, given to man at his creation, was forfeited by sin. They are no longer his willing subjects; the service he receives from them he has to extort by constraint. They flock not now around him, as in innocence, but flee from his presence. They dread him as their enemy, instead of loving and revering him as their lord. Many of them, assuming superiority in their turn, cast upon him a glance of hostile defiance, and compel him to betake to flight, that he may escape falling a victim to their merciless ferocity. And to what but to the mediatorial interposition is it owing, that man retains any control over the lower animals, and that the members of the church have secured to them, among other privileges, ‘a covenant with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground?’ [Hos. 2.18.] No other satisfactory account can be given of this, than that which is supplied by the fact of God’s having put under the feet of his Son ‘all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea.’

Scripture history amply and beautifully illustrates this department of mediatorial rule. It is no dream that the sun, moon, and stars, do obeisance to our New Testament Joseph. At what but his command was it, that the sun stood still for a time on the dial of Ahaz? To what but to his power can it be ascribed that the strange order was exactly obeyed—‘Sun, stand thou still upon Gideon, and thou moon, in the valley of Ajalon?’ Or to what but to this was it due that ‘the stars in their courses fought against Sisera?’ The winds and the waves, too, acknowledge his power. He it was who made the waters of the Red Sea to stand up on a heap till his people passed through, and then to collapse for the destruction of their enemies. At his command it was, that Jordan was dried up, to make a way for the ransomed of the Lord to enter into their promised inheritance. ► His power over the element of fire, appears in his preserving unhurt the three children whom the incensed monarch of Babylon caused to be thrown into the burning fiery furnace, heated seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And his power over the opposite element, appears in his casting down upon the Canaanitish kings, at Beth-horon, great stones from heaven, so that there were more who died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword. [Josh. 10.11.] ► The *beasts of the field*, whether domestic or untamed, obeyed his command. When he wanted a colt, on which, in fulfilment of prophecy, to ride into Jerusalem, he had only to send his disciples to a particular spot, where they found one standing ready for his use, which they appropriated unchallenged, because ‘the Lord had need of him.’ [Luke 19.34.] When his servant Daniel was thrown into the den of lions, he sent his angel to shut their mouths, and when he was taken up out of the den, no manner of hurt was found upon him. ► The *fowls* of the air are no less subject to his control. When the inhabitants of the ark were becoming anxious for the abating of the waters, he it was who commissioned the dove with an olive leaf in its mouth to intimate that they had begun to be assuaged. When the prophet by the brook Cherith was hungry, and had no means of

obtaining food, ravens, under the same infallible and resistless guidance, brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; their own natural appetites being restrained to prevent their consuming these supplies themselves. ► Nor are we without examples of his power over the *fish* of the sea. He ordered his disciples to let down the net on the right side of the ship, and immediately there was inclosed a great draught of fishes. When he was in want of money to meet the demand of temple tribute, he instructed one of his attendants to go to the sea and cast a hook, and the fish which first came up had in its mouth the coin required. That even reptiles and insects felt his authority, appears from some of the plagues sent on the Egyptians, from the fiery serpents by which the rebellious Israelites were so severely chastised, and from the viper fixing on the hand of an apostle without doing him harm. How true is it that the mediatorial dominion extends over the inanimate and irrational parts of creation; and how fully do the facts of the church's history illustrate this extent of power!

Discussion Questions

1. What passage does Mr. Symington regard as most useful to settle questions about the universality of Christ's Mediatorial rule and how this relates to his offices as mediator?
 - A. Ephesians 1.22, where Paul says, "And gave him to be head over all things to the church."
2. What characteristic or attribute of Christ's power may be estimated from the connection Paul states between it and the honor awarded to him by the Father for his work of redemption?
 - A. The connection attests to the *importance* of this power.
3. What ought to be remembered by persons skeptical of the universality of the Mediator's kingly office?
 - A. They should recall the praises of heaven, represented in Rev. 5.15 and 19.6, ascribing universal reign to the Messiah, in connection with his acknowledged honor.
4. When examining scripture evidences for the universality of Christ's mediatorial supremacy, what circumstance is understood as establishing that such passages relate to Christ's mediatorial power rather than his essential power?
 - A. When the power or authority is said to be *given* to Christ, it cannot be understood as relating to his essential power, and must be taken as relating to his mediatorial power.
5. If it is possible that the territory over which Christ exercises power as Mediator is co-extensive with that over which he rules with essential authority as the Son of God, what difference accounts for speaking of them in two particular rights or spheres of authority?
 - A. "His investiture with mediatorial authority... means his having had conferred on him a right to employ the power which he always possessed as God, for the specific objects of his mediatorial work."
6. What are some of the passages of Scripture which may be cited as evidence for the universality of Christ's dominion as Mediator?
 - A. Matt. 11.27; Matt. 28.18; Acts 10.36; Eph. 1.22; Col. 2.10; 1 Cor. 15.27; and Heb. 2.6-8.
7. What are the several classes of "things" among "all things" which are put under Christ's feet?
 - A. Inanimate and irrational creation; inferior animals; the sun, moon, and stars; water in the greatest bodies thereof; fire; the beasts of the field; the fowls of the air; and the fish of the sea.