

MESSIAH THE PRINCE,
Or, The Mediatorial Dominion of Jesus Christ.
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Sabbath Afternoon Studies: Part 20.

CHAPTER 8.
THE MEDIATORIAL DOMINION
OVER THE NATIONS.

It was before remarked that under the universal dominion of Messiah are comprehended two grand associations, the peculiar importance of which seemed to render necessary a more full and separate discussion of each. These are, the church and civil society. To the former some attention has been given in the preceding chapter. We now take up the latter.

The matter, here, is the headship of Jesus, as Mediator, over the nations of the world, or the political associations of men. Besides its own intrinsic importance, this branch of our subject demands attention, from the neglect with which it has long been treated, from the opposition it has had to encounter, and from its intimate connexion with questions which are fiercely agitated from time to time.

I. Let us first of all look at the EVIDENCE in support of Christ's right of dominion, as Mediator, over the nations of the earth.

His mediatorial authority over the *church* is readily conceded. Nor is there any hesitation to admit that Christ, *as God*, exercises a sovereign control over the civil affairs of men. But that he does so in his *mediatorial* capacity seems not to approve itself so directly to the minds of many. Yet a candid consideration of the proof which we have it in our power to bring forward, cannot fail, we think, to remove every shadow of doubt on this subject.

Indeed, the point in question might be argued on other than direct Scripture testimony. It might be argued on the ground that Christ's investiture with mediatorial dominion does not suppose the abrogation of his necessary right of dominion as God. As before remarked, in assuming the office of Mediator, he did not divest himself of any thing belonging to him as divine. His moral authority over all creatures being essential to his very existence and character, never was, and never indeed could be, laid aside.—His moral fitness to exercise such dominion, might also be insisted on.—The terms of absolute universality, as formerly shewn, in which the mediatorial dominion is spoken of in the word of God, further imply what we have now in view. For if all things are delivered to him of his Father, if all power is given to him in heaven and in earth, if all things are put under his feet, it is not easy to see on what principle any thing so vast and important as the civil associations of mankind could be excepted.—
► Nay, the necessity of such an extent of mediatorial power as includes the nations of the

world, to his performing with efficiency the functions which belong to him as Head of the church, is enough to set this question for ever at rest. Without such extent of power, he could never open up a way for the diffusion of his gospel among the nations of the earth; could never, either subordinate their administration, or overrule their rebellion, so as to bring about the period when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. But, without insisting on these points, in regard to which the evidence is of an inferential nature, let us give our attention to the direct proof by which the dominion of Christ as Mediator over the nations is supported. By nations, of course, we mean civil associations; men existing in civil or political institutions; including the office-bearers by whom the laws are administered, as well as the people at large for whose good they are appointed to govern.

First. In looking into the Word of God, we find subjection to Jesus Christ as Mediator directly enjoined upon civil rulers. ‘Be wise now, therefore, 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, when his wrath is kindled but a little’ [Psalm 2.10-12.] The person to whom subjection is here enjoined, is doubtless the Messiah. ‘The Son’ is a title by which the Redeemer is often designated, both in the Old and New Testaments. If Solomon, the son of David, is referred to at all, it can only be in a very subordinate sense. ► We are at no loss to shew that a greater than Solomon is here, even He who was at once David’s Son and David’s Lord,—the Son of David according to the flesh, but the Son of God by a high, necessary, and ineffable relationship. Again and again, throughout the New Testament, do we find passages from this psalm referred to Christ.¹ One may here suffice for the establishment of this point. ‘And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; who, by the mouth of thy servant David, hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done’ (Acts 4.24-27).

The psalm, then, refers to Christ; but does it refer to him in his mediatorial capacity? There can be as little doubt, we think, on this point, if only the scope of the psalm itself, and the purposes for which it is elsewhere quoted, are considered. The opposition of which it speaks, is opposition made to him as Mediator; as the Lord’s Anointed; as He whom the Father hath set King upon his holy hill of Sion; in the same capacity, in short, in which he is to have the heathen given him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.

And on whom is it that this psalm enjoins subjection to the Mediator-King? On ‘kings,’ and ‘judges;’ that is to say, civil rulers, supreme and subordinate. But is it civil rulers in their personal, or in their official, capacity? There are some who evade the force of this passage by alleging that it is only in their private character that they are here addressed. But this is

1 Acts 4.25; 13.38; Heb. 1.5; 5.5; Rev. 2.27.

contrary alike to the whole scope and design of the psalm, and to the concurrent testimony of the most judicious commentators. Indeed we have only to consider in what capacity it was that the opposition spoken of was offered to the Son by civil rulers. It was in their public character, undoubtedly, that Herod and Pontius Pilate conspired against the holy child Jesus; and we are only acting on the plain principles of fair interpretation, when we conclude that it is in their public and official character also that civil rulers are here commanded to do homage to the Redeemer;—that kings and judges are required as such to serve the Lord with fear, and to kiss the Son lest he be angry.

Nor can there be a doubt that the *duties*, to which the terms in which these injunctions are expressed refer, involve the idea of complete moral subjection,—the subjection that inferiors owe to a superior, that subjects owe to a king. Such is the common meaning of the verb to ‘serve,’ as well as the sense in which it is often used in Scripture. And one passage will be sufficient to shew that to ‘kiss’ is expressive of loyal subjection to a reigning prince:—‘Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his (Saul’s) head, and *kissed* him, and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?’ [1 Sam. 10.1]

Here, then, we have a most decided, unequivocal proof of the right of dominion over the nations of the earth which is possessed by the Mediator; for, had not such been his right, it is inconceivable that the Spirit of God should have enjoined subjection to him upon all civil rulers without exception, whether supreme or subordinate, whether belonging to Old or to New Testament times. We have here a command of universal and permanent obligation; and, while it retains its place in the Word of God, it will be impossible to deny the dominion which Jesus as Mediator possesses over the nations of the earth and their rulers.

Secondly. Predictions respecting the kingdom of the Mediator, conduct us to the same conclusion. Predictions in general unfold the purposes and appointments of God. Whatever, therefore, we find predicted regarding Christ, must be included in the grant of the Father to the Son. Now, dominion over the nations is matter of frequent announcement in prophecy.

The forty-seventh psalm is understood to refer to the Messiah. His exaltation to glory, the gathering of the Gentiles, and the ultimate establishment of his kingdom of righteousness and peace, form the subject of this beautiful ode. The ascension of the Redeemer is plainly referred to in the expression, ‘God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.’ Nor can it be doubted, from this circumstance itself, that it is in his official, and not his personal, character that he is spoken of throughout the psalm. Now, mark the expressions which are employed with regard to his dominion. He is described as ‘a great king over all the earth;’ as He who ‘shall subdue the people under us, and the *nations* under our feet;’ as He who ‘reigneth over the *heathen*;’ as He to whom ‘the *princes* of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham;’ as He ‘to whom belong the *shields* of the earth.’ [Psalm 47.2,3,8,9.] These are not equivocal expressions. The nations and their princes are distinctly specified as brought under his control, and as doing him homage, which certainly imply a right of dominion over them; while magistrates who are set for the defence of the people, are undoubtedly meant by the shields of the earth, which are said to be his property.

The seventy-second psalm is, by universal consent, referred to Christ. In only a very inferior or subordinate sense can it be understood of Solomon. To whom but David's greater Son can its lofty descriptions be applicable? Of whom but the Messiah can it be affirmed that his name shall endure for ever; that men shall be blessed in him; and that all nations shall call him blessed? We may rest assured that the psalm celebrates the majesty, benignity, and dominion of Jesus as Mediator, with the glory, peacefulness, extent, and duration of his kingdom. Now, observe how many things are contained in it bearing on our present subject. 'The kings of Tarshish and of the Isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him. All nations shall call him blessed.' [Psalm 72.10,11,17.] No language can more directly assert the doctrine for which we are contending. The Mediator, as such, is spoken of. Kings and nations are expressly introduced in their civil capacity as recognising his dominion. And the acts of homage in which they are represented as engaging, are such as necessarily involve the idea of distinct moral subjection;—namely, bringing presents, offering gifts, falling down before him, serving him, and calling him blessed. He who is the legitimate object of such acts must possess a rightful dominion over the nations and kings of the earth.

'Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing-fathers, and their queens thy nursing-mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and shall lick up the dust of thy feet.' [Isaiah 49.22,23.] This is a very decisive passage. The prophecy refers to New Testament times, when the Gentiles are to be gathered unto the Redeemer. A prominent feature of these times shall be the subserviency of civil rulers to the church, which surely supposes their subjection to Christ her Head. *Kings shall be thy nursing-fathers* is a similitude which imports the most tender care, the most endearing solicitude; not mere protection, but active and unwearied nourishment and support. ► If, according to the opinions of some, the best thing the state can do for the church, is to let her alone, to leave her to herself, to take no interest in her concerns, it is difficult to see how this view can be reconciled with the figure of a nurse, the duties of whose office would certainly be ill discharged by such a treatment of her feeble charge. But to neutralise the force of this beautiful passage, it has been alleged that rulers are here spoken of, not in their public or official, but in their private or personal, capacity. It is supposed to mean nothing more, than that persons of exalted station shall become the devoted servants of Messiah, and take a deep and pious interest in the concerns of his kingdom. And this view is understood to be confirmed by the pronoun '*their*' occurring before the word 'queens,' denoting, as is alleged, that they are spoken of, not as queens *regnant*, but as queens *consort*. It is, however, far from being self-evident that queens are spoken of here in the latter capacity; for every candid person will admit, that the very same phraseology might as naturally be employed in speaking of queens-*regnant* in relation to their husbands, as of kings-*regnant* in relation to their wives. It is, therefore, not by any means clear that queens are here to be understood as consorts only. ► Nor, even admitting this, will the inference follow from it

legitimately, that the kings are to be understood merely in their private domestic capacity as consorts of the queens. When in countries where there is a married king the subjects pray for the blessing of God on their king and *his* queen, as they are in the habit of doing, the queen is of course queen-consort; but it surely cannot be supposed that because his partner can only be viewed as associated with him in her private capacity, they do not refer to the monarch himself in his official capacity. Even admitting, then, for the sake of argument, the interpretation proposed with regard to queens—that they are only referred to as consorts—the inference drawn with regard to kings does not follow. It does not follow that kings are referred to only in their private capacity. The kings may still, after all, be kings-regnant: and the utmost that the passage can be made to bear is, that both kings and queens, whether regnant or consort, are bound to exert all the influence they possess, in their own proper spheres, to aid and foster the interests of Christ's kingdom in the world. Because queens-consort can do this, only in their own proper sphere, it surely does not follow that kings-regnant, in their proper sphere, are not also bound to do the same. On the contrary, the prediction before us leads us to conclude, that, in the times of the gospel, persons of the most exalted public stations shall exert their influence on behalf of the church of Christ; and this certainly supposes the subjection of such to Christ himself.

The same view is strongly corroborated by another passage in this prophecy. 'Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breasts of kings.' [Isaiah 60.11,12,16.] Here there cannot be the shadow of a doubt about the sense in which kings are spoken of. The pronoun '*their*,' in this instance at least, is decidedly in favour of the view that they are to be regarded in their public capacity; they are spoken of as the people's kings, or kings in the possession and exercise of official power and influence. In this capacity, they are represented as ministers to the church of Christ in various ways. Nor is the passage less decisive, that it comprehends a threat of awful judgment denounced on such nations and rulers as shall refuse to yield the service required. Surely, unless civil society had been placed under the dominion of the Mediator, there could have been no room for supposing, either that such duties are obligatory, or that such consequences shall follow the neglect of them.

'And it shall be the prince's part to give burnt-offerings, and meat-offerings, and drink-offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel.' [Ezek. 45.17.] The remarkable prophetic vision, with which these words are connected, is, we believe, held by all judicious commentators to refer to the church in New Testament times. Without pretending minutely to explain the import of all the figurative allusions, the words we have quoted would seem plainly enough to carry in them the idea, that the civil ruler is to give public support to the institutions of the church of Christ, which, as in the case of the passages above quoted, necessarily implies that magistrates, as such, are under the authority of the Mediator.

‘And I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him.’ [Dan. 7.13,14.] The reference of this passage to Christ will not be doubted. The eternal Son of God, viewed with regard to his human nature and mediatorial character, is he who is called ‘the Son of Man.’ The power spoken of is clearly mediatorial, as it is said to be ‘given’ him. It is also universal, including ‘all nations,’ of whom it is predicted that they should ‘serve him,’ which certainly supposes the possession of rightful authority over them.

‘And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.’ [Rev. 11.15.] The phrase, *the kingdoms of this world*, necessarily suggests the idea of social relations and civil rights—all those public interests and immunities, in short, which distinguish a compact civil body from a loose assemblage of private persons living in a disconnected state or individual capacity. All know that such is the idea attached to a *kingdom*. But the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of Christ. It must, therefore, be, in the same sense in which they are kingdoms in the one case, that they are to become kingdoms in the other. ► Now it is not the private sentiments or individual conduct of the inhabitants of a land, which gives character to a kingdom of this world, as such; neither are the adoption of Christian principles and practices, by the great bulk of a people, sufficient to constitute the nation a kingdom of Christ. The nations of the world have, in their national capacity, too plainly acknowledged and served the god of this world. [2 Cor. 4.4.] They have also, in too many instances, proclaimed themselves kingdoms of antichrist, giving their power and support directly to the beast, in their public social character. When the happy state of things announced in this prediction shall have been introduced, it is impossible to believe otherwise than that these kingdoms shall, in the same public social capacity, become the kingdoms of Christ. And what does their becoming the kingdoms of Christ import? Certainly, at the very least, that for which we are now contending; namely, that, in token of their subjection to him, they shall recognise his authority, and subordinate their interests to the advancement of his glory.

‘And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.’ [Rev. 21.24,26.] It is the church which is here spoken of as receiving the attention in question. Whether in its millennial or celestial state, commentators are not agreed. But whichever of these views is taken, the passage must be understood as describing a course of preparation that takes place on earth, as it is only in this world that national and official distinctions exist. Now, if nations, as such, are to walk in the light of the New Jerusalem, that is to say, are to derive distinguished honour and privileges from the church of Christ, they must surely be regarded as under the dominion of the church’s Head. And if kings, as such, are to bring their glory and honour into it, that is to say, are to subordinate their authority, power, revenues, and whole administration to the interests of Christ’s kingdom, they also must be regarded as under the dominion of the Mediator.

Such is the voice of prophecy on this interesting subject. Every unprejudiced mind must admit that it bears decided testimony to the doctrine we are now attempting to establish. Many more passages might have been quoted. Indeed, the whole tenor of Old Testament prediction speaks the same language. No one, therefore, who has any respect for the word of God, can hesitate to admit that Christ possesses mediatorial dominion over the nations of the earth.²

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Discussion Questions:

1. Although many Christians are ready to concede that Christ exercises a mediatorial authority over the church, what are they not as ready and willing to acknowledge?
 - A. They hesitate to admit that Christ exercises a sovereign control over the civil affairs of men in his mediatorial capacity.
2. Does the investiture of Christ with mediatorial dominion suppose him to have abrogated his necessary right of dominion as God?
 - A. No: neither with regard to the church, nor with regard to the nations.
3. What do we mean when we speak of “nations”?
 - A. “Civil associations; men existing in civil or political institutions; including office-bearers by whom the laws are administered, as well as the people at large for whose good they are appointed to govern.”
4. What is the first way in which the Scriptures represent to us Christ’s right to exercise dominion over the nations as mediator?
 - A. We see this in the word of God wherever subjection to Jesus Christ as Mediator is directly enjoined upon civil rulers, such as in Psalm 2.
5. What New Testament passage serves to fortify our understanding of Psalm 2 as speaking of civil rulers in their official capacity?
 - A. Acts 4.24-27, where Herod and Pontius Pilate, who used their civil authority against God’s anointed, are acknowledged to be the agents of fulfilling this Psalm, as it speaks of rulers resisting God’s anointed.
6. What is the second way in which the Scriptures represent to us Christ’s right to exercise dominion over the nations as mediator?

2 ‘God addresses the nations in a collective capacity, reproves them for their idolatry, and calls them to his worship (Isa. 34.1; 41.1,21-29). He proposes Christ, as his anointed servant, to them (chap. 42.1); declares that he has given him the nations for his inheritance, and that he shall inherit them all (Ps. 2.8 ; 82.8 ; Isa. 52.15; 55.5). Christ addresses himself, not only to individuals, but to whole islands (Isa. 44.1); nations join themselves to him (Isa. 2.2; Micah 4.1,2; Zech. 2.11; 8.20-22), bless themselves, and glory in him (Jer. 4.2); all nations and dominions serve him (Dan. 7.14,27). They consecrate all things in them, and employ them in his service (Isa. 60.6-12; Zech. 14.20,21); he owns these nations as his, and blesses them, while he breaks in pieces and wastes others (Ps. 33.12; 145.15; Isa. 19.25; Ps. 2.9,12; Isa. 60.12). The force of the argument arising from these and similar predictions, is such that Mr. Edward Williams, although an independent, acknowledges that they imply a national profession and establishment of Christianity. In answer to the objection, “If the above prophecies refer to national conversions, does not that lead to national churches?” he replies, “That a national establishment, if WELL ORDERED, appears more agreeable to the prophetic passages we have been considering than the antipædobaptist plan; nay, more agreeable to the general tenor of revelation.”—M’Crie.

- A. The frequent predictions respecting the kingdom of the Mediator also lead to this conclusion.
7. What are two Psalms which clearly teach Christ's mediatorial dominion over the nations?
A. Psalm 47 and Psalm 72.
8. What are two passages in the book of the prophet Isaiah which teach this doctrine?
A. Isaiah 49.22,23, concerning the role of kings as nursing-fathers to the church; and Isaiah 60.11,12,16.
9. What is the strength of that contrary-argument which some advance about queens being represented in a personal capacity, rather than reigning capacity?
A. Nothing, because it is still most natural to view the passage as speaking of kings in their reigning capacity.
10. What other prophets have contributed to declare to us the relation of the Mediator to the Nations?
A. Ezekiel, as in chapter 45.17; and Daniel, as in chapter 7.13,14; and John, as in Rev. 11.15.