

# Messiah, Governor of the Nations of the Earth: A Discourse

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*The blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. 1 Tim. 6:15.*

MESSIAH, RULER OF THE NATIONS.

REV. 1:5. *Jesus Christ—the Prince of the Kings of the earth.*

THE Church of Christ is, comparatively, a small society. Those who were given to the Son, in order to be redeemed by his blood, and sanctified by his spirit, are really a great multitude, which no man can number; but the sincere followers of the Lamb, at any period since the publication of the gospel, when compared with the wicked of the world, are a very little flock.

In the church men are connected upon principles different from those which usually lie at the foundation of human associations. The laws of this society, the punishments annexed to disobedience, and the means of defence which the members use, are all spiritual. Christians, nevertheless, consider themselves under obligations to sacrifice all earthly considerations to the interest of religion. The visible church has, consequently, a tendency to absorb every other interest, and render all other societies subservient to itself. This is observed by the world, and contributes to excite a spirit of hostility to the gospel. *The heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and against his anointed, saying, let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us.*<sup>1</sup>

Christianity being thus threatened by the constituted authorities of the nations, can the church in their dominions escape destruction? Yes! Christ is Prince of the Kings of the earth. This secures her from ruin, and animates the hope of her children.

The Apostle John stood in need of the comfort which the knowledge of this truth afforded. From his great age, his public employment, and his ardent zeal, he had acquired an extensive and painful acquaintance with the hostility which existed in the breasts of rulers to the cause of Christ. During the persecution of Domitian he was banished to Patmos. This island, now called Patino, is situated in the Archipelago, on the coast of Natolia, between the isles of Samos and Nicaria. Although, at present, the residence of the Caloyer monks of the convent of St. John, it was then a desert. The lonely inhabitant of this unfrequented spot, the venerable Apostle, had leisure to mourn over the distresses of the Church of Christ, while there was power on the side of the oppressor. Here he received the revelation, which so clearly describes the mediatory authority, and the manner of its exercise over the nations for the safety of the church.

Being in the spirit on the Lord's day, Jesus Christ appears to him as *the faithful and true witness, the first-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the earth.* It is this last

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 2:1-3.

character of the Mediator which I design to illustrate in this discourse. In the words we are to observe the *title* given to Messiah, a Prince—and the character of his subjects, Kings.

Prince is a member of the royal family; but *arxwn*, the word in the original text, is more: it is one who is himself a ruler. Sensible of this, our translators have generally rendered it ruler throughout the New Testament.<sup>2</sup>

The subjects of this Ruler are the kings of the earth, in their official characters. Basileuj is not a personal designation, nor is it confined to the chief magistrate of a monarchical or despotic government. It would be a perversion of scripture and of common sense to affirm that nations governed by kings were ruled by the Mediator, while of other forms of government he took no notice. It is moreover to be observed, that it was in his mediatory character Christ appeared to the Apostle John. In this character he describes him as the faithful and true witness, the first-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the earth. From these words the following truth is proposed for discussion:

*Christ, as Mediator, rules over all the nations of the earth.*

I shall endeavour,

I. To confirm this doctrine; and, in order to do so, recourse must be had to the sacred scriptures.

These are they which testify of Christ. To revelation alone we are indebted for our knowledge of the system of grace, and of the mediatorial character. The efforts of unassisted reason would never have discovered the great mystery of godliness. No; not from a view of the natural world; for the human intellect is not able to trace any necessary connection between creation and the redemption of sinners by a Mediator: nor from the dispensations of Providence; for although these are all subservient to the system of grace, the connection is too mysterious to be ascertained by the mind, without supernatural aid. In the Bible we have a sure word of prophecy, to which we do well that we take heed. Having submitted to its authority, we must embrace all the doctrines explicitly taught in it, and employ our powers of reasoning in deducing inferences from its established axioms; for when such deductions are legitimate, they are of divine authority. If the evidences of scripture declarations, and of fair inferences from scripture premises, be admissible, I shall not have great difficulty in proving the doctrine of the proposition.

1. There is a moral fitness in the mediatorial person to be the Governor among the nations.

Civil society, under whatever form of visible government, cannot be managed, as it respects the system of created being, by a more suitable character than Messiah. An appeal to the common sense of men about the qualifications of a legitimate authority, and to the sacred oracles about the person of the Mediator, will settle this point. And if it shall appear that the King of Saints is morally fit to be King of Nations, we shall have good reason to conclude that he does officiate in that capacity,

He who may lawfully be invested with authority over moral agents, individually or collectively, must, of necessity, possess a due measure of *wisdom*, of *energy*, and of *moral excellency*. Without intelligence, none is capable of governing rational creatures. Common sense

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<sup>2</sup> Luke 8:41; John 3:1; Acts 4:8, &c.

rejects the authority of an ass or an idiot. Without power to execute the purposes of wisdom, government would be a nullity. Authority, without ability to act, would be contemptible and useless. And however extensive the intellectual capacity, and energetic the arm of the ruler, without he also possess a moral disposition, he cannot be recognized as the governor of moral agents. The greater his natural endowments of knowledge and physical forces if he be destitute of benevolent principle, the more dangerous and destructive will be his authority. Common sense would shudder at a proposal to have a malicious spirit, a devil, to be the ruler of moral agents, the chief magistrate of any civil society. It is, moreover, proper, that the occupant of the chair of state among any people be united to them by natural ties, by sympathy, and by a participation in their troubles.

All these qualities are concentrated in Messiah. He is clothed with every divine attribute. His are wisdom infinite, power almighty, and moral excellency supreme. He is God. He is also man. He is our brother. He has a special interest in men. He has a fellow-feeling of our infirmities. As God, he had a perfect knowledge of what we are, what we feel, and what we desire. But the Mediator has a knowledge which, as God, he could not have possessed—an *acquired*, an *experimental* knowledge of the human nature, and of all its sinless pains and infirmities. Astonishing thought! The Son of God learned obedience by the things which he suffered.<sup>3</sup> Say, then, is it not proper that he should be appointed as the King of kings, and owned universally as the Governor among the nations?

2. It is necessary that Messiah should rule the nations; because otherwise the mediatorial office would be inadequate and imperfect.

It would be presumptive in man to affirm that the system of grace necessarily flowed from the divine perfections, while the scriptures uniformly resolve it into the good pleasure of Jehovah's will: But, adopting for truth the system of redemption through the blood of Jesus, we are capable of perceiving a necessary connection between the leading members of that system and the great body. If our divine Lord have actually purchased, by his suffering unto the death, those who were given to him by the Father, it is necessary that he be appointed head over all things to the church. But more particularly,

First, it is necessary that Christ have power over the nations, that he might commission his ministers to go into them to preach the gospel. Matt. 28:18, 19. Unless his authority were paramount to that of the existing governments, it would have been an usurpation inconsistent with divine perfection to have sent his ambassadors to negotiate with the inhabitants of the earth.

Secondly, it would have been ineffectual. The mediatory power to make his people willing could not reach into any nation over which his authority did not extend. The kings of the earth have sufficient forces to banish from their dominions the heralds of the cross; and there is enmity in the hearts of men sufficient to reject the gospel of God, and to render its preaching altogether abortive, unless the mediatory efficiency accompany the ambassadors of Christ and the message which they bring.

Thirdly; that Messiah should rule the nations is necessary as the reward of his sufferings. His exaltation is the reward of his abasement. *He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him?*<sup>4</sup> Christ, in his humiliation, was subject to rulers.<sup>5</sup> He sat before them to be tried and judged, and although perfectly innocent, the Lord of life condescended to suffer the sentence of death, passed by an

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<sup>3</sup> Heb. 4:15 and 5:8.

<sup>4</sup> Phil. 2:8, 9.

<sup>5</sup> Isa. 49:7.

earthly ruler, to be executed upon himself. In his exalted state, he must, therefore, be ruler in the kingdoms of men; have a right to demand *their* submission to *his* authority, and take such measures as may secure the fulfilment of all his purposes respecting them. It is,

Fourthly, necessary that Immanuel should have power over the nations and their respective governments, as the guardian of his church in the midst of her enemies, and as the terror of all those who are his foes;<sup>6</sup> otherwise, his children might be in a situation in which he could not regulate them, and his enemies might act with impunity against him. If magistracy be not subjected to Christ, he has it not in his power either to convey the special aids of his grace to pious Christians for the discharge of the duties of civil offices, or to punish his enemies for the most malicious acts of mal-administration. However the personal character may be under his cognizance, he can have nothing to do with the official character. The absurdity of this is too glaring. It is indispensably necessary, therefore, that Zion's King should rule the nations, to give efficacy to his gospel, to reward him for his abasement, and to afford safety to his church.

3. We may argue the truth of the doctrine from the promise of God to his Son.

The promise of future good raises our expectation in proportion to our confidence in the veracity of the promiser; and when we have complete assurance of his infallibility, we may certainly calculate that he will perform his word. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised.<sup>7</sup> The promiser is God. Yes, Lord, *Thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty. I will beat down his foes before his face. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, thou art my Father, my God. Also, I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth?*<sup>8</sup>

The scriptures uniformly teach us that the Father hath engaged to place the Mediator on the throne of the nations, upon condition that he should become a substitute for sinners, and make atonement for them. The Son has fulfilled the condition by his law magnifying services. He is, therefore, authorized to claim the honour of the most splendid, exaltation. Psa. 2:8. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. The grant is made in unlimited terms. And that it is made by God to his Son cannot be denied by these who have attentively considered the second Psalm. Whatever allusion it might have had to the opposition made to Solomon's succession to the throne of David, most assuredly a greater than Solomon is here. If any shadow of doubt can remain as to the propriety of this application, it immediately vanishes before the light of the New Testament. The inspired writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, 1:5 quotes this Psalm; in order to prove to that people, from their own scriptures, the dignity of the Mediator. For the same purpose it is quoted in five different places of the New Testament.<sup>9</sup> Jehovah having thus promised to invest the Mediator with supreme authority, publishes the decree to the nations. Rulers and judges are instantly commanded by him from whom all legitimate authority emanates, to submit their power to Messiah, under pain of being considered as rebels, and of receiving the award of the rebellious. *Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.*<sup>10</sup> The connection between this official exaltation and the sufferings of Christ is clearly displayed by the prophet.

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<sup>6</sup> Psalm 110:1-3.

<sup>7</sup> Heb. 10:23.

<sup>8</sup> Psalm 89:19, 23, 25, 26, 27.

<sup>9</sup> Acts 4:25; Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5. Heb. 5:5; Rev.2:2.

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Isa. 53:12. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he has poured out his soul unto death.

4. We have direct evidence in the sacred volume, that a commission has been actually put into the hands of the Mediator, authorizing him to rule the nations of the earth.

The Father has fulfilled his promise to his Son, and hath put all things under his feet. *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. In this chapter we have a view of the great political movements of the nations; and of the proper character of the Chaldean, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian and the Roman empires, particularly of the latter under its anti-Christian form.<sup>11</sup> To counteract the influence which a sight of the aspects of those monsters frowning upon the church might have had upon the pious mind, the prophet is commanded to reveal the vision he had of the ancient of days, giving an appointment to one like the Son of man. The ancient of days is Jehovah. The description is applicable to none other. The one like the Son of man is the Mediator. He was made like unto his brethren. God sent forth his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. The appointment given by God to his Son in our nature extended over all nations; and although we have no right to expect that the rulers of the earth shall universally acknowledge Messiah as Lord until the anti-Christian power shall have been abolished, he was crowned over the empire of the universe, and solemnly proclaimed King of kings, immediately on his ascension to the Father's right hand, after his resurrection from the dead; and he actually governed in this capacity from the period in which mercy first dawned on our guilty world. When the KOL YEHOVAH ELOHIM,<sup>12</sup> Jesus the word of God, was heard walking in the garden, he acted as the one Mediator between God and man; revealed mercy to the miserable, procured a suspension of the sentence of death, and upheld the pillars of earth. When he published the system of grace, the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, he acted in the character of the prophet of the covenant. But the exercise of this office pre-supposed the exercise of the office of a priest, and implied the exercise of that royal authority, without which the prophetic office would have been absolutely ineffectual.

Similar to this vision with which Daniel was favoured while captive in Babylon, was the representation made to John the Apostle, while in his banishment in Patmos. Rev. 5:1, 2, 5, 7. *And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book, written within, and on the back side sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel, proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold the lion, of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.* The purposes of the divine mind, like a sealed book, remain to be unfolded and executed. These decrees, and the right to execute them, are Jehovah's. The book is in his hand who sits on the throne. God seeks an actual administrator of his purposes. Proclamation is made, Who is worthy to open the book? Messiah, amidst the approving shouts of innumerable intelligences, approaches the throne, and receives the important appointment. The Lamb slain, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, receives the book, and looses all its seals. Who shall refuse to acknowledge thee, O Jesus, as Prince of the kings of this earth?

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<sup>11</sup> This is given under the emblem of four beasts, the last of which had ten horns. Verses 3-8. See Pool, Henry, Newton, &c. *in loco*.

<sup>12</sup> Gen. 3:8.

5. Christ himself affirms, in positive terms, that he is in possession of authority to rule the nations.

He thus addresses the Father—*Thou hast given him power over all flesh;*<sup>13</sup> and to his people he announces the same truth—*All things are delivered to me of my Father.*<sup>14</sup> The scriptures are intended not to mislead, but to direct our faith. And if they had been designed to convey the sentiments for which we are contending, they could not have expressed them in a more pointed manner.

As the Mediator was God, he could not, by becoming man, have divested himself of divine attributes. Although he voluntarily entered into a relation inferior to that in which the Father stood, this did not imply a diminution of essential perfection. In the mediatorial character, his person continued omniscient and omnipotent. He necessarily possessed *ability* to govern the nations; but in this official capacity he stood in need of *authority*. He had *dunamij* (physical power) of himself, but he received *ecousia* (moral power) from God. Matt. 28:18. "Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Perfect credit is due to these words. Jesus, about to step into the heavenly throne, utters them in the hearing of his apostles. Authority unbounded over all creatures in heaven and in earth is given unto him by God. The crown of the nations shall flourish on his head, for he is exalted *far above all principality; and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.*<sup>15</sup>

6. Several additional witnesses appear to attest the truth of this doctrine. The Holy Spirit, faithful ministers, the whole body of the church, the angels of light, and the united voices of all creatures; proclaim this truth—"The Mediator rules the nations of the earth." Let us attend to their respective testimonies.

The Holy Spirit is a distinct person of the godhead, and he is a distinct witness for the person and character of the Mediator. 1 John 5:7. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father; the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." To the Spirit is particularly ascribed the inspiration of the writers of revelation; and what the inspired writers teach is especially the testimony of the Spirit of Truth. *Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*<sup>16</sup> We have seen what the Father personally has done in exalting Messiah over the nations; we have heard what Jesus positively asserted about his own authority; and we shall now produce the testimony of a third infallible witness to the same fact. Psa. 8:6. "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." Heb. 2:8. "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." If the nations and their rulers be any thing, they are put under the feet of Christ. A proposition, universal as it respects the system of created existence, admits of no exception. And as the witness is infallible, we cannot innocently reject his testimony.

Unless we make the Holy Ghost a liar, in refusing to embrace the doctrine which he advances respecting the Mediator, we shall recognise Jesus as Prince of the kings of the earth. Revelation introduces other characters also who joyfully testify their confident belief in the doctrine of Christ's headship over the nations. Rev. 5:8, 9. "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, and they sang a new song,

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<sup>13</sup> John 17:2.

<sup>14</sup> Luke 10:22.

<sup>15</sup> Eph. 1:21.

<sup>16</sup> 2 Pet. 1:21.

saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." The four living creatures, *tessarazwa*, are all the faithful ministers of Christ. The four-and-twenty elders are the united congregations of the Old and New Testament saints, All who were redeemed by the blood of Jesus, whether officers of the visible church or, private Christians, confess, in their songs, the extent of the mediatory authority over the political movements of society; and the connection between the exaltation and the sufferings of their Redeemer. They celebrate his praises with joy. The sealed book, delivered to the Head of the Church, although it immediately respected the events which succeeded the publication of the gospel in the Roman Empire, necessarily conveys the idea that Messiah had authority to over-rule all nations, in all ages, as well as during the period of time which exists between the commencement of the New Testament dispensation and the end of the world.

While the Church of Christ on earth *sets to their seal that God is true*, in believing, the testimony which he has given them of his Son, in his kingly as well as in his priestly office, the Church in glory is joined by the angels in celebrating the praises of the Lamb upon the throne of the universe.

The unbodied spirits, which have long enjoyed the divine, presence, are deeply interested in those works of God which come within the sphere of their extensive observation. When the foundation of the earth was laid, the morning stars shouted for joy. When the corner-stone of the building of mercy was laid in the constitution of the mediatorial person, the angels rejoice; and at the incarnation of the Son of God, they light upon the earth, mingle their songs with those of the shepherds, and welcome the Babe of Bethlehem to the world. These ministering spirits are at his service on earth; on the morning of his resurrection they cheerfully attend him; they accompany him in his ascension to his Father's throne; and themselves obedient to this exalted character, they ascribe to him all power and dominion over the nations of the earth. *And I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and honour, and glory, and blessing.* Thus do the angels when they see him receiving the sealed book. It is on the same occasion that the united acclamations of all other creatures evidence their assent to the doctrine taught in this discourse. *And every creature which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.* Each, according to his capacity, is made to acknowledge this truth. Whatever may be the present views of rational creatures, there is a day coming when none can deny that Jesus is Lord of Lords. But let us consider,

## II. The acts of his administration

Being invested with authority over the nations, the Messiah now governs them. The character of his administration cannot fail to be good and interesting to man. It is, indeed, impossible to enumerate all the official acts of the Prince of the kings of the earth; but we may take a general and cursory view of them.

### 1. The Mediator executes the divine purposes respecting the nations.

The origin, the progress, and the dissolution of national associations and governments, and every accompanying circumstance, were fore-ordained by him who worketh all things after the counsel

of his own will. Not a motion or a change in the physical or moral world which he did not foresee, and to which he did not give a place in his eternal arrangements.

Some nations have had their origin in rapine and blood; others have gradually ascended to eminent rank and power from small and contemptible beginnings, Distinct empires have arisen from the contentions of belligerent nations—have commenced in revolutions—have been founded in usurpation—or have been formed by the general consent of a certain portion of mankind associating under a constitution of their choice. But, however various the proximate causes which have contributed to the formation of different governments, none of them could act independently of the great First Cause.

All the subsequent steps of the national government are provided for in the decrees of the Eternal. Before he launched the vessel of state upon the ocean, he determined the distance, and all the circumstances of the voyage. The counsels of rulers—the wars into which they enter—the management of their interior and exterior relations—all their transactions—are absolutely dependent on the divine agency, and under the management of his providence.

God hath also appointed the time of the fall of empires. In his calendar, are marked the hours of dissolution, agreeably to which every nation must have its doom. All the agents engaged in altering and overturning governments are dependent on God for their being, their motions and actions; and all these, and all their consequences, have found a place in the purposes of his mind. In point of actual administration, the Mediator executes all these purposes. The Redeemer of the Church actually embraces all arrangements respecting the nations, in discharging the functions of his office as King of kings and Lord of lords. The Father *has given him power over all flesh, and has delivered all things unto his hand.*<sup>17</sup>

To illustrate this truth, and to comfort the church with it, is the design of a great part of the revelation given to John. Christ opens the seals of the book given to him by the Father. He conducts the administration of providence according to the decrees of God. Upon the opening of those seals, causes and effects appear in a regular order. All the instruments employed by Jehovah, in the establishment, management and dissolution of national governments, come to view in the regular succession of times and events.

The decline and fall of the Roman empire; the ravages of the Saracens and of the Normans; the commencement and destruction of the Ottoman power; the rise, progress and downfall of the papal authority, and the European governments connected with the anti-Christian system, and the relation which all these celestial movements have to the Church, Christ reveals to us by his servant John, shows that they are absolutely under his management, and that, after he has shaken and overturned all the thrones of iniquity, he will confer the greatness, the kingdom and the dominion under the whole heaven, upon the saints of the Most High.<sup>18</sup>

2. Messiah opens a door among the nations for the introduction of his gospel.

To the system of grace the kingdoms of this world are opposed. Every unregenerate heart is enmity against God. This enmity pervades every relation into which they enter, and characterises every act which they perform. A society of such characters is a combination of conspirators against Jehovah. Their national policy especially manifests this. In the constitution of their authorities they disdain divine direction. Hos. 8:4. "They have set up kings, but not by me; they have made princes, and I knew it not." Governments, thus constituted without the divine approbation, receive from the prince of the power of the air the sanction of their authority. Rev. 13:1-6. "And I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and

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<sup>17</sup> John 17:2; Matt. 11:27.

<sup>18</sup> Revelations from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> chapter. Dan. 7:18.

upon his horns ten crowns; and the dragon gave him his power and his seat, and great authority; and all the world wondered after the beast." Governments, thus sanctioned by Satan, and deriving authority from him, faithfully serve this usurping adversary. *Power was given him to make war on the saints; and all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life.*

Such is the state of the nations, and the character of their policy: but the Prince of the kings of the earth is their superior. He baffles their counsels; he serves himself by their intrigues. Their enmity and their opposition shall praise him; and their exertions, over-ruled by him, shall open a door for the introduction of the gospel among them.

The Mediator, declaring that all power on earth is his, Matt. 28:18 commissions his messengers to enter every nation, and, clad in spiritual armour, to display his banner among them. He accompanies them—*Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* He prepares the way for their entrance by opening a great and effectual door, and constantly encourages them, by announcing, in the clearest manner, his right and his power to rule the nations in the exercise of the mediatorial office. Rev. 3:7, 8. *These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth. Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.*

3. He calls their subjects into his kingdom of special grace.

Such is the authority of the Mediator over the governments of the nations, as to entitle him not only to send his ministers into their dominions, but also to take those over whom they rule under his protection, and enlist them under his banner. The gospel, the rod of his strength, he sends out of Zion; his spirit he sends along with it; and thus he gathers together those whom the Father hath given him from among the nations. He makes them willing to serve him; and although he permits them to continue in such external relations as were in themselves lawful, and not encumbered with conditions inconsistent with allegiance to himself, he makes them sensible that there is no concern or business incident to humanity, either in an individual or collective capacity, which the principles and motives of Christianity ought not to pervade and govern.

Whenever it suits the designs and the policy of government to oppose, by force, the reduction of such principles to practice, the Head of the Church makes the arm of the persecutor the mean of discovering to the world the power of his grace in supporting the persecuted; and weapons of destruction, in opposition to the intentions of those who use them, are made instrumental in spreading the gospel on earth, by scattering its faithful votaries, and of introducing into endless happiness the martyrs of his cause, sealing with their blood the testimony which they held. Paul persecuted is carried in chains to Rome, and proves the instrument of increasing the number of the disciples of our Lord. From the household of blood-thirsty Nero, the reigning emperor,<sup>19</sup> converts are made to Christianity; and if the enraged tyrant wrested from the apostle's hand the trumpet of the gospel, the Ruler even of tyrants placed in it the harp of glory. The memorable era of the Protestant Reformation affords full evidence that all the cunning, and all the power of antichrist, was insufficient to over-rule the purpose of Christ, of increasing the number of his faithful subjects, by calling them from their allegiance to those kings who had agreed to give their power unto the beast, and of enlisting them as courageous soldiers under the banner of the true cross.

This subject, brethren, which my heart indites, is a good matter: to speak of the things touching the King. Oh that my tongue were as the pen of a ready writer! Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty! and in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and

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<sup>19</sup> Phil. 4:22.

righteousness. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies. The people fall under thee. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever. The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Psa. 45:1-6.

4. Messiah, in his administration of the government over the nations, issues orders to earthly rulers, descriptive of the manner in which they are to behave with respect to his Church. The Church of Christ is a kingdom not of this world; but the kingdoms of the world are bound to recognise its existence. To pretend ignorance of its existence would be hypocrisy in the rulers of a land enjoying the light of the gospel; and not to take such an important circumstance into account, in their plans of government, would argue inexcusable ignorance of the first principles of jurisprudence. The wise politician calculates upon all the actual and eventual relations of society, gives its due weight to every circumstance, and, without a clear view of the whole ground, whatever may be his integrity, he must be incapable of discharging in a proper manner the high duties of the office of a civil governor. Agreeably to this, it is impossible to legislate in a country where Christianity is generally embraced, precisely in the same manner as if no such thing existed. The existence of the Christian Church is a fact of too great notoriety, and of too much importance to the interest of morals and politics, to remain absolutely unnoticed by the rulers of the land. But were it even possible, in such a country, to legislate precisely in the same manner as if the religion of Christ had never been introduced into it, it would be wicked to an extreme; it would be direct rebellion against the authority of God. Psa. 2:10, 12. Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed; ye judges of the earth, Kiss the Son, lest he be angry; and ye perish from the way.

Pharaoh raised Joseph from a dungeon to the first office himself. Proclamation was made by royal authority that every subject should bow the knee before the exalted Hebrew. Jehovah has raised Jesus from the grave to a throne in heaven. Eph. 2:20, 21. He raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion. The Mediator, thus exalted over the highest grades of creature authority, demands of all his subjects to bow the knee before him, He requires of the powers which are named in this world, that in their official stations they would *remove impediments* to the progress of religion, *and afford protection* to his church.

If Christianity be at all valuable, the general diffusion of its principles must be calculated to advance individual and social happiness; and if these are objects worthy the attention of the civil magistrate, it is his duty to use every exertion for the removal of obstacles to their introduction. Coercion, indeed, may never be used in order to make his subjects religious; but it may and must be used in order to suppress immorality, profaneness and blasphemy; and in order to remove the monuments of idolatry from the land.

It is the duty of the civil ruler also to protect the church, and to afford her support. The practical application of this principle must, indeed, be regulated in some degree by existing circumstances; but to reject it entirely from theory and practice would be a declaration of hostilities against God. The language of this conduct is, *We will not kiss, the Son*. Divine revelation describes the character and the duty of the civil ruler, and points out the connection which his administration is to have with the church. *"He that ruleth over men must be just ruling in the fear of God. Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. He is the minister of God to thee for good—a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Thus saith the Lord, Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers: They shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth. They shall not be ashamed that wait for me. Thou shall also suck the milk of the gentiles, and shalt suck the breasts of kings; and thou shalt know that I the*

*Lord art thou Saviour and thou Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob*"<sup>20</sup> This language is strong, copious and decisive. It announces the will of Messiah, as to the manner in which worldly governments are to treat the church. We have examples of their having done so, and of their having met with the divine approbation and blessing. *Hezekiah did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves; and the Lord was with him, and he prospered whithersoever he went.*<sup>21</sup>

5. The King of nations over-rules the disobedience of governments, and renders all national acts subservient to his own glory and the church's good.

National societies, as well as individuals, often oppose the clearer dictates of God's law. They refuse obedience to the Mediator. But whether they will serve him or not, he will serve himself by them. They may be rebellious, but not with impunity. His counsel shall stand. The wrath of man shall praise him. Their plans and their forces, their ambition and their usurpation, their wars and their treaties, receive from his invisible agency a direction, however disagreeable to their designs, that shall eventually prove serviceable to his purposes, and shall really fulfil his decrees. The most daring conspiracy in the provinces of the mediatorial empire only serves to discover the energy of the arm of government in its suppression. "The shields of the earth are his. By him kings reign and princes decree justice. In order to fulfil his will, he puts it into the heart of the kings of the earth to agree, and to give their power unto the beast." Notwithstanding, no weapon formed against Zion shall prosper. All things shall cooperate for the good of the church. All things are under his feet. He rules in the midst of enemies.

6. In the administration of his government, Christ punishes the powers of the earth for the neglect of their duty.

Their impious transactions fulfil his decrees; yet they are not the less criminal on that account. His plans he will not suffer his creatures to derange; therefore he renders their efforts subservient to them. The impiety of their purposes, and the wickedness of their actions, he nevertheless does not overlook, but calls to an account all his enemies, high or low, rich, or poor. "Kings and judges shall perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." The Mediator not only administers covenant blessings to his church, but he also dispenses the cup of Jehovah's wrath to the wicked. The plagues and the pains, the disappointments and the distresses, which the high and the powerful experience, are from Messiah. *He shall strike through Kings, in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.*<sup>22</sup> All the instruments of the Lord's indignation are in his hand.

The coals of the altar he scatters for the punishment of those who refuse to submit to him. With tyrants as with a scourge, he lashes the disobedient populace. The earthquake of revolution swallows the thrones of despots. With the whirlwind of war he sweeps away like the chaff, the deluded slave, and the ambitious ruffian who have hired themselves "to commit deeds of blood in order to secure success to schemes of iniquity." *He shall remove the diadem, and take off the crown; exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. He shall overturn, overturn, overturn, and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is, and he will give it him.*<sup>23</sup>

Having thus endeavoured to prove that the mediatorial character is king of nations as well as king of saints, and having presented to your view some of the acts of his administration, we

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<sup>20</sup> 2 Sam. 23:3; Rom. 13:3, 4; Isa. 49:23, and 60:16.

<sup>21</sup> 2 Kings 18:3, 4, 7.

<sup>22</sup> Psa. 110:5, 6.

<sup>23</sup> Ezek. 21:26, 27.

shall proceed to consider the objections which some professed Christians may offer against placing the crown of the nations upon the head of Immanuel.

### III. Examination of objections

After such evidence as has been given in the scriptures to the truth for which I now contend, it must be viewed as a singular phenomenon in the religious world, that Christians are to be found who refuse this honour to their divine Lord. Are there then any, who doctrinally tear from Messiah's head the crown of the nations? Alas! there are. This principle has been thought calculated to draw after it consequences which it would be unsafe to grant. Various objections have therefore been offered to it; and repeated warnings have been given from the press and the pulpit, to beware of embracing this doctrine. It is not, however, to any particular publication that I shall refer in the present discussion. My sole object is to show the truth rising triumphant from the stroke of error.

OBJECTION I. "The Mediator, as such, is distinct from God. To ascribe to Christ the government among the nations, is to exclude Jehovah from the throne, or reduce him into the state of an idle on-looker."

ANSWER. This subject, as well as others, which treat of the relations of divine persons to one another, must, of necessity, be of difficult exposition or comprehension. In the system of grace, we have a revelation of doctrines which infinitely transcend all the powers of man to discover without its aid: And even, when revealed, although accredited upon the divine testimony, we cannot completely comprehend all the circumstances with which these sublime mysteries are surrounded. There are three distinct persons in the unity of the divine essence. In this there is no absurdity. We believe it upon the divine testimony, but to explain the eternal generation of the Son, or the procession of the Spirit would be impossible. And although we do not undertake to explain precisely the manner in which three divine and distinct persons distinctly *will*, and distinctly *act*, in creation, providence and redemption; we are at no loss to show, that the principle contended for in this discourse does not increase the difficulty, or lead to absurdity. Nay, that the objection now under consideration will prove too much if it have any weight, and is consequently to be rejected as involving a manifest inconsistency.

I grant to you, my brethren, that the mediatorial office is distinct, from the essential perfections of the godhead; but you will also grant, that the officer himself is Jehovah. By the assumption of the human nature into a personal union with divinity, though the mediatory character be distinct from the divine, the mediatory person, and the second person of the Trinity is but one and the same. To ascribe to Christ, therefore, in his mediatorial character the government of the nations, is not to introduce a distinct person into the throne, but to declare the character in which the Son of God now rules in the kingdoms of men. This is not liable to your objection. There is no change of person. There is not even an exclusion of character; for all divine attributes belong to Messiah. "Although the word was made flesh, the word was God, and so was and continueth to be both God and man in two distinct natures and one person for ever." You may as well argue, that a work ascribed to the Son necessarily excludes the agency of the Father and the Holy Spirit; and, consequently, that the first and third persons had nothing to do with creation, as affirm, that the ascription of an act to Messiah excludes the agency of Jehovah.

Again, upon the principle of your objection, the Mediator cannot be the King and Lawgiver of his Church, because this would also exclude Jehovah from among his ransomed sons and daughters. I need not attempt to convince you, that this is not the scriptural view of that subject. God reigns in Zion. You believe that he does. Without any disparagement to the divine character, without supposing Jehovah an idle observer of the church's concerns, you adopt the principle, that Christ is head of the church, and will not hesitate to join his family in their address to him, "the Lord is our king, the Lord is our lawgiver, he will save us." Why then will you say, that to proclaim Messiah king of nations would be to thrust Jehovah from his throne. God reigneth universally. Jesus sits at his right hand. He also reigneth over the church, and over the nations. Christ himself, in order to anticipate every objection of this kind, taught, while on earth, that his agency, even in the state of voluntary abasement into which he entered, did not militate against the constancy of his Father's working; nor did the Father's agency about the very same object imply the Son's idleness—*my Father worketh hitherto and I work.*<sup>24</sup>

OBJECTION II. "The distinction between the church and the state cannot be supported, if the kingdom osus includes both; but in opposition to his own declaration, "*my kingdom is not of this world;*" These distinct Societies would be blended together to their mutual injury destruction."

ANSWER. The church has had a long and painful experience of the evils accompanying an improper connection with civil government. Sensible of this, men have endeavoured to correct it, and, as it is generally the case, at the abolition of a complex system, truth was discarded as well as error. The idea has become prevalent, that civil rulers, as such, have no right to recognize the Christian system and that the church, as such, has nothing to do with politics: And as the only firm foundation on which this new system might be erected, the more determined part of its espousers have refused to acknowledge Messiah as king of nations.

What force there may be in this objection, the following observations tend to show.

1. "Christ's kingdom," whether as understood of the visible church, or of the nations, "is not of this world." Both are *in* the world. Both are ruled by him on earth. His authority is, however, from above; it is paramount to all earthly power, and for the exercise of it, no creature has a right to call him to an account. This text<sup>25</sup> confirms the doctrine of Christ's headship over the nations.

The prophets of Israel spoke of Jesus as a king, to whom all kings must submit or perish. Daniel, particularly, spoke of him as the destroyer of the great power of the Roman empire. Jesus applied these promises to himself. He was accused therefore of treason against Caesar. Pilate asks him, if he were really a king. He answers in the affirmative, and in such a manner as appalled the heart of Pilate so that he was the more afraid.<sup>26</sup> "My kingdom is not indeed of the earth. My power is from Jehovah. Over all his subjects I rule. To none of them am I accountable; I do not administer the government on worldly principles, or for worldly ends. No power on earth can prevent my kingdom from flourishing." He who has on his vesture and on his thigh, a name written, *King of kings and Lord of lords*, never could deny, that his kingdom extended over all the nations of the earth.

2. There are instances of nations having distinct constitutions and laws, existing under the government of one monarch; and if it be possible for a frail and sinful man to preside over

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<sup>24</sup> John 5:17.

<sup>25</sup> John 18:36.

<sup>26</sup> Psa. 72:11; Dan. 2:44, 45; Hag. 2:20-23; John 19:6-12.

distinct empires, there, certainly, can be no necessity for destroying the distinction between church and state, because they are under the government of one glorious Lord. England and Scotland were distinct kingdoms under one monarch, from the year 1605 until 1707. Great-Britain and Ireland continued distinct kingdoms until 1801. The several states under the federal government are not mingled with one another; but, with respect to the rest, each exercises a distinct sovereignty, although they all be retired under one common head.

If we have so many instances among the nations, of two or more distinct societies, owing allegiance to one sovereign, there is no inconsistency in teaching the doctrine of Messiah's headship over the nations, with teaching that the church is to be kept perfectly distinct from the national society. No; there is no necessity that they should intermingle, even if both should own Jesus as king, and the members of both be the same. One respectable character may be a member of the Missionary Society of New-York, and of the Philosophical Society of Philadelphia; he may preside over each of these institutions, and they continue perfectly distinct.

3. There is no possibility of maintaining the distinction between church and state, without setting the one in opposition to the other, but by recognizing this doctrine, and acting agreeably, to its spirit and design. Allegiance to the King of Zion, and the Prince of the kings of the earth; would induce the church and state to maintain their respective constitutions. The visible officers, in order to do their duty, must administer the government according to his law; and doing so, political and ecclesiastical concerns will not be intermingled. These societies are distinct in *their origin, their end, their officers, and their laws.*

Civil society derives its origin from God as the author of nature, but is put under the feet of the Redeemer, as all creatures and institutions are, for the sake of his body, the church. Ecclesiastic society immediately originates from Christ as the head of the new creation; but is, ultimately, from Jehovah, who conferred upon Christ the mediatory authority.

Civil government is instituted for the purpose of maintaining order and happiness among the human family on earth, and respects the institutions of Christianity, as the most effectual mean of attaining this end. Ecclesiastic government is instituted for the purpose of preparing the saints for future glory, and respects the ordinance of civil government, as subsidiary, to that grand design, by the preservation of good morals, and suppression of vice.

Civil magistrates, as such, have no right to officiate in the church; nor have church rulers any right, by virtue of their ecclesiastic commissions, to perform the official duties of the civil authorities.

The law of nature is the rule of the magistrate's duty, and embraces the scripture revelation for its illustration and aid; because it necessarily binds all the subjects of moral government, to attend to every communication which the author of nature makes to them of his will. The precepts, which are supernaturally revealed, are the rule by which the affairs of the church are to be managed; but the inductions of reason, and the law of nature, are also included, because revelation presupposes their existence, and sanctions their authority.

These necessary distinctions may, and ought to be maintained by all who acknowledge the Mediator as ruler in the kingdoms of men.

OBJECTION III. "The gift of the nations to the Mediator is useless. They do not acknowledge him as their sovereign, in their constitutions of government; nor do their established authorities serve him. It is dishonouring to God and to Christ, to affirm that Messiah has received power over the nations, since it is evident that the power of the nations is generally exercised in opposition to the mediatorial interest."

ANSWER. It is a lamentable fact, too well substantiated, that the policy of the nations has generally proved hostile to the religion of Jesus. Christians are, however, not much surprised at this, nor are their expectations deceived. No man need hesitate to subscribe to a sentiment so clearly sanctioned with apostolic, yea, divine authority. All nations are put under the feet of the Redeemer; but they do not acknowledge him. Heb. 2:8. *Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. But now, we see not yet all things put under him.* It is not apparent to us that they obey the Lord. His revealed will they assuredly oppose. Until the public mind be friendly to the Saviour, the expression of the public will, in national acts, cannot be directly intended to honour the Mediator. Christ gave previous notice to his disciples, that the kings of the earth would agree in resisting his authority, for a certain period of time not as yet elapsed.<sup>27</sup>

This fact, nevertheless, does not militate against the doctrine to which you object. I proceed to show, that the *principle* of your objection leads to absurdity, and that the *assertion* you have rested upon it is false.

1. This objection would exclude Jehovah from the throne. You say, the nations oppose Christ, therefore he is not their king. You must also grant, if they oppose God, Deity does not rule over them. That all who oppose the Son, oppose the Father, no Christian will deny. God himself, therefore, if there be any force in the objection, is not governor among the nations. The scriptures, happily for the saints, teach otherwise. God reigneth, let the earth rejoice. All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.<sup>28</sup>

2. The gift is not useless. Men and nations may refuse obedience to Christ, but they cannot withhold it from him. They can violate his law, but they must fulfil his purposes. They all involuntarily serve him. The Father hath said unto him, *Rule in the midst of thine enemies:* He must therefore reign until all his enemies be scattered.<sup>29</sup> The usurper and the warrior are his servants. The wicked is the rod of his indignation. With this he can punish and correct; afterwards he can burn it in the fire.

OBJECTION IV. "Christ is the ruler of the nations, but not in the character of Mediator. As God, equal with the Father, his kingdom is universal; but as the Messiah, he is king only in the church."

ANSWER. It is not denied: that Christ is qualified for the government of the nations by his being God, equal with the Father and the Blessed Spirit, in power and in glory. No mere creature would be competent to the arduous task. Supreme he could not be, even in Zion, were he not the Son of God as well as the Son of man. He would not be a fit prophet, or priest, or king, were he not in his person omniscient, omnipotent, and infinitely perfect. The mediatory character is, notwithstanding, distinct from the godhead. It is voluntary and official. The office is not essential to divinity, but was voluntarily undertaken by the Son, who is in this capacity the Father's servant.<sup>30</sup> In order to ascertain the validity of the objection, we must search the scriptures. If the power of Christ over the nations be there represented as belonging to *the official character*, and as a *conferred gift*, then shall it appear that the view I have taken of it is accurate.

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<sup>27</sup> Rev. 17:13, 14, 17.

<sup>28</sup> Psa. 97:1; John 5:23.

<sup>29</sup> Psa. 110:2.

<sup>30</sup> Isa. 42:1.

1. The scriptures attribute to Jesus Christ, as a part of the mediatory character, the government of the nations. It is not denied, that supreme dominion is naturally, and necessarily, the property of the Son as well as of the Father; but it is also ascribed to Messiah as a part of his exaltation. The eternal Son, as God, is not capable of elevation, from a humbled to an exalted state. This honour belongs to him as our Representative. So do all the parts of it; and that his headship over the nations is included in his exaltation, and consequently belonging to the official character, cannot be denied without offering violence to these texts: Eph. 1:20, 21. *He raised him from the dead, to set him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.* Phil. 2:9, 10. *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name, which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth.*

2. The authority is represented as a gift made to him, Matt. 28:18. *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.* Heb. 2:8. *Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.* It is only as Mediator, that Christ could receive a gift from the Father. As God, all things were necessarily his own. Blessed Jesus! Hasten the period, when the nations shall acknowledge thee as Messiah, their prince.

OBJECTION V. "The power of the Mediator extends over the nations, but he does not generally exercise it. The Deity alone directs natural causes to their natural ends. Messiah never interferes with the government of the nations, but when it is necessary to alter the order of nature, and to use supernatural means for supernatural purposes.

ANSWER. There is a specious appearance of refinement in this sentiment, and because it is novel, it is apt to impose on the itching ear. The eagle-eyed believer, however, who considers it in the light of truth, instantly perceives, that the principles of the objection are self-destructive and unscriptural. Listen, my brethren, while I also show mine opinion.

1. The sentiments of the objection are self-contradictory. You acknowledge the mediatory authority to be paramount to the powers which rule among men; and you grant, that the agency of Messiah actually regulates all movements which are directed to spiritual and supernatural ends: but you nevertheless believe, that in ordinary events, the mediatory character is not concerned. I would remind you, however, that all things ultimately tend to a supernatural and spiritual end; consequently, upon your own principles, must be under the direction of the Redeemer.

Will you admit subserviency to the glory of the head of the church, and the salvation of her members to be a supernatural end? If you neglect this, I am at a loss to find such an end among all the objects of thought. To this very end, all things connected with human life are directed. There is not a single exception. Inquire of him who has the words of eternal life. The scriptures testify of him, His word to the church is, *Let no man glory in men, for all things are yours. And we know, that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*<sup>31</sup>

2. The distinction you' make between the *ordinary course* of events and *miracles*, with design to teach that the latter only is the effect of the Mediator's power, is unscriptural. You would teach, that *some things* only are put under the power of Christ. The scriptures teach, that

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<sup>31</sup> 1 Cor. 3:21; Rom. 8:28.

*all things* are placed in that situation. Heb. 2:8. *For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him.*

3. Natural causes, in the production of natural effects, are also under the direction of the Mediator of the better testament. These have all an ultimate supernatural end to answer; and not only in this, but in every step leading to that end, is the mediatory efficiency exercised. Nothing is more natural to God than the exercise of distributive justice. Not to punish sin would be inconsistent with divine perfection. *The Judge of all the earth shall do right. And the Father himself judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the hands of the Son.* Yea, Messiah is the judge of quick and dead. All mankind shall be arraigned before the tribunal of the exalted Son of man, and from his mouth hear their sentence pronounced, and the ground on which it rests explained. All punishment in this life, and in that which is to come, is inflicted by him. John 5:27. *The Father hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.*

There are two grand establishments, agreeably to which God deals with the human family, the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace. There is no transaction of God with men individually or collectively, but passes through the medium of the one or the other of these establishments. Christ is the administrator of both covenants. The fulness of the covenant of grace is in his possession. Out of it believers receive from him grace for grace. He dispenses the curses of the old covenant as well as the blessings of the new. All that remains to be transacted, upon the footing of the covenant of works, is of a penal nature. The condition is violated; the promise is forfeited; and, consequently, the threatening must be executed. The Father hath given the Mediator authority to execute judgment. The whole bond of the covenant of works was put into his hand. He subscribed this bond, in behalf of his elect, as their surety. He has paid their debt, and administers to them purchased blessings. He exacts payment of the reprobate in his Father's name. He arrests them, and judges them, and condemns them. He executes the sentence, and inflicts upon them death eternal. John 5:28, 29. *Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.* Matt. 25:41. *Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*

You must, therefore, discover, among the movements of natural causes, and the succession of natural events, things which have no reference to either covenant, or else admit that the mediatory power extends to all. O blessed Father, thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

OBJECTION VI. "The admission of Christ's headship over the nations would involve us in a dilemma from which we could not be extricated. If Messiah be King of nations, and Christians have sworn allegiance to him, they cannot consistently be in allegiance to any civil government which is opposed to the kingdom of Christ. No man can serve two masters. And yet the scriptures command every soul to be subject to the higher powers, and teach that the powers that be are ordained of God." Rom. 13:1.

This is an objection with which I have often met. It appears to be a formidable one; and it has assuredly influenced many serious minds to call in question the duty of contending for the doctrine of Christ's headship over the nations, as a part of that faith which was once delivered to the saints. Minds, unused to deep thoughtfulness, and devoid of accurate habits of

discrimination, are shocked at the seeming inconsistency, and take neither pains nor delight in ascertaining the very truth on this important subject. Such will have their opinions modified, by education, connections, interests and worldly honours. It is difficult to learn, *not to confer with flesh and blood* about religious truth. In answering this objection, I propose to show that your *difficulty* cannot be diminished by embracing any other hypothesis, and that there is really no *inconsistency in this doctrine* with the command to be subject to the higher powers.

1. The difficulty in which you are involved, by admitting that Messiah rules the nations, will not be diminished by the supposition, that God, essentially considered, governs them.

My Christian Brethren, you have sworn allegiance to God as well as to the Redeemer. You are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Those nations that oppose Jesus, oppose the Father also. God and Messiah have precisely the same friends and the same foes. If your allegiance, ye heirs of glory, to the rulers of this earth, induces you to reject the exalted Jesus from the throne of the nations, you must, in order to be consistent, deny the government of the world even to the Father. Yes, in this case, as well as in the former, ye cannot serve two masters.

2. It is impossible such a dilemma could exist, as that you must necessarily renounce obedience to the Prince of the kings of the earth, or transgress the commands of his Heavenly Father. God's precepts are not contradictory. Whatever he has appointed is in subserviency to the Mediator. He does not approve, he cannot sanction with his authority, that government which is constituted upon immoral principles. To an immoral constitution he never shall require the obedience, the allegiance, the subscription, or the support of his subjects.

*Such powers as oppose God or Christ, are not ordained of God, in any other sense, than the prince of the power of the air, whom they serve, is; nor does God require that every soul should obey them. The authority which he sanctions, and to which he demands conscientious allegiance, is one which is a terror to them who do evil, and a praise to them who do well.*<sup>32</sup>

Submission to such is submission to God; allegiance to governments of a contrary character is rebellion against Heaven.

God is, however, a God of order, and your weapons, Christians, are not carnal. Conformity to the general order of society is a duty, provided this can be done without violating the divine law.

If this be all that is meant by submission to government, there is no inconsistency in it, with allegiance to the King of nations. And, perhaps, the conscientious obedience of the most of men to the *powers that be*, includes no more than this, except what arises from mere selfish principles. You will, however, easily perceive, that if the constituted authorities of the nations are in a state of voluntary subserviency to the Mediator, they must have the approbation of God, and be entitled to your faithful and conscientious support: you will perceive, although they be of a contrary description, that for the sake of peace and order, for the sake of contributing as much as possible to the ease and the happiness of society, and from a spirit of resignation to the Divine Providence, and in order to make legitimate provision for yourselves and your relatives, so much conformity to the prevailing system as is consistent with the oath of your allegiance to Messiah, is a duty conscientiously to be practised, although very distinct from that obedience for conscience sake, which you would render to the government of your choice, to the authority which has the sanction of the divine approbation. And, I trust, brethren, that you will all perceive that there is no validity in the objections made to the doctrine of this discourse, and will

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<sup>32</sup> Rom. 13:3.

cheerfully join me in prayer, that our dear Saviour may speedily be owned as the King of nations as well as the King of Saints.

Suffer me, before I conclude, to suggest some considerations upon this subject, in order to assist you in the proper improvement of the doctrine of this discourse.

In this I shall take for granted the truth of it, and suggest some inferences which necessarily flow from it.

1. If Messiah be the ruler of nations, civil society, in its constitution and administration of government, should bow to him and honour him.

For this very purpose he was exalted, *that every knee should bow to him, whether of things in heaven, or of things on earth.*<sup>33</sup> Man is a moral agent: he is, therefore, under a moral law. His entering into society does not free him from its obligation; but in that relation he is also bound to an obedience that is intelligent, active, and voluntary. It is not a negative submission, so as not directly to declare war against the Redeemer, but a direct, explicit, and voluntary profession of submission to the Prince of the kings of the earth, and a firm and faithful course of consistent conduct, that is required and expected of civil rulers in their official capacity. Mere neutrality, were it possible, would not be acceptable service to an earthly superior. And shall men, in the formation of their national society, boast of their neutrality, while Messiah is their Prince? This is an insult offered to Majesty, which the exalted Saviour cannot admit with impunity from the kings of the earth. These should be nursing fathers to his church; and although employed for this purpose, shall they receive the illegitimate offspring of every malignant adversary to their equal embraces? *Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.* And shall the vicious and the vile, the debauchee and the infidel, the Mahometan and the atheist, receive from you as much countenance and support, while they go on unsettling the faith of thousands, unbridling the licentiousness of passion, removing the foundation of morality, and destroying every motive to benevolence, to piety, and to virtue, as you shall afford to the ambassadors of the King of kings, and all the faithful votaries of his gospel, in doing good on earth, and in preparing men for usefulness here and glory hereafter? *Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord—Let the mountain of the Lord's house be established upon the tops of the mountains!* Yes, Lord, thou hast past the decree. *The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. All kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him.*<sup>34</sup>

2. The ministers of the gospel are bound in duty to demand of the constituted authorities direct obedience to their King.

Ministers are ambassadors for Christ. They are commissioned by him to go unto all nations. The Bible contains their instruction—*Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.* He has addressed commands to rulers—*Be wise—Kiss the Son:* he has pointed out their personal and official character—*just, ruling in the fear of God.* He has described their relation to the church—*nursing fathers and mothers.* And say, ye ambassadors of the King, will you compliment his enemies by sacrificing to their prejudices these directions? Will you dare to negotiate the treaty by holding back any of the whole council of God? Will you separate his priestly and his kingly office? The prophets taught salvation in the name of Jesus; but they conveyed instruction to kings and all that were in authority. While you profess to love the dear Redeemer, and lead sinners to his cross for pardon and peace, will you not exalt him, and demand obedience to him from the kings of the earth? God's word is not only to be the

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<sup>33</sup> Phil. 2:10.

<sup>34</sup> Isa. 51:9; Mic. 4:1; Rev. 2:15; Psa. 72:11.

substance, but it should be the general model of your sermons. Here are taught the doctrines of grace; but here also, all nature and providence appear full of God. Remarkable periods of history are observed with a discriminating eye, the influence of political movements upon the church delineated; and the wickedness of agents directly specified and reprobated, while what is commendable is held up for imitation. What would be thought of the ambassador who would sacrifice, to the prejudices of foreign court, the dignity of the government of his native country? Who would negotiate without insisting on compliance with every article in his instructions? Shall you fear the face of man, and endeavour to act so as not to offend? Beware of being deceived. Do your duty, leave the consequence to God. You will not grieve the generation of the righteous. Rise superior to petty party politics. Leave to the ambitious, and the carnally minded, contentions for places and for pensions. Banish from your intimacy the immoral and the irreligious of every political sect. While you expose the impiety of one, and unmask the hypocrisy of another, take heed you are not, even indirectly, serving the cause of a third of the same description. Stand upon higher ground than they occupy who contend for the loaves and fishes. Then shall you act agreeably to your commission; then shall the virtuous bear testimony to your integrity; the mouths of blasphemers will then be shut; your arrows shall sharply pierce the hearts of the King's enemies; the people shall be brought in subjection to Immanuel; the haters of the Lord shall feign submission to him, and the saints shall possess the kingdom.

3. It argues despicable pusillanimity in the disciples, to see the crown of the nations taken from the Mediator's head, and not resent it.

Jesus is your Lord, Christians. He is your Saviour and your Lawgiver. Jehovah has placed on the head of your exalted friend and brother the crown of the nations. But, alas! the nations have endeavoured to pluck it off. They have publicly, practically, and explicitly declared, he shall not rule over them. As far as in their power lay, they have taken away his glory. But they have prevailed only apparently; and apparent motions are often retrograde, while the moving bodies proceed directly in their course. Fear not, neither be dismayed. Fight the good fight of faith; contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Under the banner of the Captain of your salvation you are certain of victory. Give not up to the pleasure of men the doctrine of Christ's headship. Strengthen not the hands of those who relinquish it. For the honour of your religion; for your love to the Saviour; for your desire to further the peace, the order, the happiness of society; for your attachment to the memory of the martyrs whose foot-steps you profess to follow; for the sake of defeating the schemes of the grand adversary; for your love to the divine law, and for your desire to transmit a faithful testimony to posterity, be vigilant, be diligent, and by your conversation your profession and your prayers, prepare the way of the Lord, and make his path straight, Go through, go through the gates, prepare ye the way of the people, cast up, cast up the high way, gather out the stones, lift up a standard for the people. Attempt not the delusive and vain task of supporting thrones which are to perish in the day of God's wrath. Shelter not yourselves under the wings of an authority against which the Lord has decreed destruction, but follow your Saviour among those who are called, and chosen, and faithful, until he shall have overturned the anti-Christian empire, until the Jews shall be brought into the fulness of the gentiles, until your king shall reign in Jerusalem, and over his ancients gloriously.

"In his days," my brethren, "shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him, and his enemies shall lick the dust. His name shall endure for ever, and all nations shall call him blessed; and blessed be his

glorious name for ever and for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. AMEN, and AMEN."<sup>35</sup>

THE END.

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<sup>35</sup> Psa. 72:7.