

# The Mighty Conqueror

by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

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*Christ is the King of kings and Lord of lords, with authority over all things, and his kingdom is over the visible Church.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 10:5, Matthew 28:18, Mark 5:35 - 6:8, John 1:1, Acts 9:4, Ephesians 1:22, Colossians 2:15, Hebrews 1:6, Revelation 1:5, Revelation 19:17

**Topics:** "Christ's Sovereignty", "The Kingly Office of Christ"

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## Description

Robert Murray M'Cheyne emphasizes the ultimate authority of Christ as the King of kings and Lord of lords, highlighting the final conflict between Christ and the world regarding His kingly office. He discusses the three crowns Christ wears: His mediatorial crown over all creation, His crown over the visible Church, and His crown over the redeemed. M'Cheyne reassures believers of Christ's sovereignty and power, which brings comfort, while warning the unrepentant of the consequences of opposing Him. He calls for a defense of Christ's kingly authority, especially in the face of modern challenges to His rule. The sermon serves as a reminder of the importance of recognizing Christ's dominion in all aspects of life.

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## Transcript

I BELIEVE, DEAR FRIENDS, that this passage describes the great last controversy Christ will have with this world. He has had many a controversy with it, but the last will be the greatest of all; so that it is called 'the supper of the great God' (Revelation 19:17). Now, it is interesting to notice that this last conflict will be about his kingly office; not merely his controversy about his body the Church, but whether his is to be King of kings, and Lord of lords. And the final issue is already written down: 'And I saw an angel standing in the sun: and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God: that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men' (verses 17,18). It is interesting to notice that this great controversy, which appears to be decided at the second coming of Christ, is acted over before, in miniature, just that all believers may have an opportunity of showing what side they would be on.

Let me mention some of the many crowns that are here said to be on the head of Christ. There can be no doubt that the person on the white horse is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is called 'the Word of God', a name given to none other but he. You remember, John, in his Gospel, says, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God' (John 1:1).

There are three of the crowns I would mention tonight. I do not mention the crowns of creation, or the crown of providence; but I would rather speak of his mediatorial crown - the crown he has as mediator. There are three crowns he has as mediator. The first is his crown of King over all; the second is his crown over his Church; and the third is his crown over the invisible Church - King of saints.

Christ has got the crown over all things to the Church.

You will see this in Matthew 28:18 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.' See also Ephesians 1:22: 'He hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.' Now brethren, you will observe that these passages leave nothing that is not put under Him. All power in heaven and on earth is His. And he is made head over all things to the Church; that is for the benefit of the Church.

He is the head over angels; 'Let all angels worship Him' (Hebrews 1:6). We read in Revelation that the angels join in the song: 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.' (5:11-12). We read in Matthew 25:31, that when Christ comes in His glory, all the holy angels will come with Him. All the holy angels, then, are under his power. He is the head of the angels. He is the confirmer of the angels.

And again, he is the king of devils; It is written in Genesis: 'It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel'(3:15). And you read often in the gospel, of Christ casting out devils. And remember the maniac on the other side of the sea of Galilee. When Christ commanded the devils to come out of him, they besought him to be allowed to enter into the swine, and he allowed them (Mark 5:1-20). How plainly does this show that Christ is King over devils. And we are told in the 68th Psalm that when he ascended up on high, 'he led captivity captive' (verse 18). The word 'captivity' refers to Satan, the great captivator. And we are told the same thing in Colossians, 2:15; 'And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.' in his cross. How plainly does Christ show by this that he is king of devils.

And not only is he Lord of angels and devils, but also of men. See Revelation 1:5: 'Jesus Christ...the faithful witness, the first-begotten of the dead, and the prince of kings of the earth.' Ah! It is true that as a King he is mocked by many kings; but still it is true that he is 'prince of kings of the earth'; Assyria is the rod of his anger (Isaiah 10:5) - the saw in the hands of the sawer.

And not only kings, but over nations. In the Psalm we sung, it is said,

The floods, O Lord, have lifted up,

They lifted up their voice;

The floods have lifted up their waves,

And made a mighty noise.

But yet the Lord, that is on high,

Is more of might by far,

Than noise of many waters is,

Or great sea-bellows are (93:4-5)

These are just fulfilling his purpose. And the nations who are agitated like the waves of the sea, they too are but fulfilling his purpose. Just as that vast and rolling ocean with its myriads of myriads of angry waves as they rise, only fulfill his purpose. So it is with the nations of the earth, they are tossed with one political opinion after another, with one commotion after another, yet they are just fulfilling his purpose, and he will bring order out of confusion. Ah! Friends, he is King of kings and Lord of lords. He is the Governor among the nations.

Still further, Christ is Lord over nature, animate and inanimate. He is Lord over inanimate nature. Who is this that comes walking on the sea at the fourth watch? It is the Lord of all. Who is this that stands up in the little barque, and says to the raging bellows, 'Peace be still?' What manner of man is this that even the winds and sea obey him? (Mark 5:35-51). Ah, it is Jesus the Lord of all. He is Lord of inanimate nature.

And in like manner he is Lord of animate nature. Who is this that commands the fig-tree to wither? (Matthew 21:19). It is the Lord of all. Who is this that commands the fish to bring the silver piece to Peter? (Matthew 17:27). Even he who is said, in the eighth Psalm, to have dominion over all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish in the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea (verses 7,8).

Dear friends, these is a twofold lesson to be learned from this - a lesson of comfort to the saints, and of dismay to the wicked.

To the saint. He will make all things work together for your good. He that is thy friend, thy Redeemer; it is he that has many crowns on his head. You may be poor, but he is rich, and his riches he will bestow on you. He has got all things under his feet. He is the head over all things for you; head over angels, head over devils, head over men, head over nature animate and inanimate. 'All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's. (1 Corinthians 3:21-23). Oh what a lesson of consolation is this! Three is not a wave of the sea but is thy servant, employed to waft thee glory.

And now turn we to learn a lesson of dismay to the Christless. You think this way is foolishness, and more than madness; but ah! Sinner, do you know whom you despise? He is King of kings and Lord of lords. He has got all kings, and angels, and devils, and men under him. Ah! remember that if Christ is against thee, there is none that can be for thee. Oh learn the utter foolishness of opposing Christ! Think, if you are persecuting his members, you are opposing him. 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me!' (Acts 9:4). Think, if you are opposing him, you are opposing one who has all power, and therefore able to destroy.

I now come the second crown that Christ wears - His crown over the visible church.

This is the kingdom that he spoke of to Pilate: 'My kingdom is not of this world' (John 18:26). It is beautifully described in the confession of Faith (25:2):

The catholic, or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ, the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

This is the invisible church, of which I am now speaking. But then follows;

The visible church, which is also catholic, or universal, under the gospel (not confined to one nation, as before, under the law) consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; together with their children, and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.

Observe that the visible church is composed of all those who profess the Christian religion, with their children. So that there are many among them who are not Christ's. Yet man is not allowed to reject them, for he cannot see the heart. So that now, you will observe that this is his kingdom over which he rules.

The clearest evidence of this is the first three chapters of Revelation. For example, the first chapter, thirteenth verse: 'And in the midst of the seven candlesticks was one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to his feet, and girt about with a golden girdle.' Now, observe, the garment appears to be the robe worn by the priest; but then, the golden girdle - what do we make of it? It cannot refer to the priesthood, for the priest did not have such a thing; so that we are constrained to believe that it refers to his kingly office. I have no doubt but that this chapter is intended to represent Christ as prophet, priest, and king of his church.

And to confirm this, just observe, that there are characteristics mentioned that do not appertain to the priesthood; for example, in the 2nd chapter, 16th verse, it is said, 'Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.' Observe, this is his kingly power.

Another example is the 23rd, 'And I will kill her children with death, and all the churches will know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give to every one of you according to your works.' Observe, it was not the duty of priests to destroy men's lives, but to save them. So that here we have the kingly office of Christ.

But some will say that this is the invisible church that is mentioned. But observe it is to the churches that the epistles are addressed. There were many only professors. What make you of Sardis, which had a name to live, and was dead? So that the golden candlesticks represent the churches as they were, not as they ought to be. So that this shows Christ not only to be king of saints, but king over the church. Christ is the appointed King of Zion: 'I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion' (Psalm 2:6).

Now, brethren, to explain this more fully, let me show you two things that he doth to this kingdom.

He (1) appoints officers, and (2) gives laws. This is what our Queen does. She appoints officers, and she gives laws. So is it with Christ, he appoints his ministers.

He has appointed three sorts of ministers in his church. He has appointed pastors, then elders, to assist the pastor, and then deacons to serve tables - to look after the poor. These are officers he has appointed over the visible church. He has given 'Some, apostles; some, elders; some, pastors and teachers' (Ephesians 4:11).

He hath not only given officers, but laws. Let me mention some of the laws of the kingdom: 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature' (Mark 16:15). This one of Christ's laws, and, you will observe, if any say we are not to teach and preach, they are rebelling against the Lamb. There is a law that has often been interfered with. You know ministers were forbidden to preach in a certain district some time ago. And there was a time in Scotland, when people were forbidden to attend conventicles, when Hugh McKail, and Cameron, and Renwick, were martyred for preaching the Gospel. And this is the spirit

that is amongst us at present; men wish to take the power out of Christ's hand.

There is another law, namely, the appointment of sacraments. Christ said, 'Go and baptise all nations' (Matthew 28:19); 'This do in remembrance of me' (Luke 22:19). These commands were first given to the disciples, and are now given to ministers.

There is another law. It is the law commonly called that of the keys. Christ said to Peter, and afterwards to all the disciples: 'I give unto the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose in earth shall be loose in heaven' (Matthew 16:10). I believe that whatever we do in discipline according to the laws of Christ, it is ratified and sealed in heaven.

And then there are some laws for his people. One is to hear the Word. 'Take heed how you hear' (Mark 4:24). Christ commands you to hear his preached word. There may come times, such as there were under the second Charles, when men will be forbidden to hear preaching.

Another law is the choosing of their own office-bearers; 'Look ye out among you seven honest men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom' (Acts 6:3). This is a fundamental law of Christ's kingdom.

Another law is, you are to submit yourselves to those who bear rule over you. There is a passage at the end of the Hebrews that speaks of this: 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they must give account' (Hebrews 13:17).

I will not prosecute this farther; but, remember that Christ is not only King of kings, but King of his Church. This is what has been attacked in our day, and it is this which we are called to defend. You remember what Livingstone says: 'What would you think of the man who, when the city was besieged, should buckle on his armour, and run to the east port, where there was no danger, while the enemy was at the west?' Now, it is Christ's kingly office that they are attacking, and it is this we ought to defend. They say Christ is not King in his Church. They say Christ has not given power to his ministers - power to ordain or refuse. Ah! my friends, this is the point of the kingly office which is attacked, and it is this which you are called on to defend.

I come to the third and last point: Christ is king of his own redeemed body.

It is from this that he gets the title, 'King of saints'. 'Who shall not fear thee, thou King of saints?' (Revelation 15:3-4). There are three things which Christ dies as a king to every saved soul.

The first is at conversion, see Acts 5:31: 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.' You will notice that the office of Christ as King is to give repentance and forgiveness of sins. It is his work to say, 'Live!' Ah! friends, has he done this to you? Observe, it is not the work of man: 'He will not give his glory to another, neither his praise to graven images' (Isaiah 42:8). It is from his throne at the right hand of God that he sends the Spirit, and makes three thousand cry out, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?' (Acts 2:37). It is a most affecting truth I have shown you, that you may be a member of his kingdom, and not a member of his grace.

Another kingly act of Christ over his Church is to forgive sins. 'The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins' (Mark 2:10). Ah! dear friends, it is a kingly act to give pardon.

The third work that Christ does as a King over his body is to sanctify them. It is written in Micah, 'Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgressions for the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy' (7:8). Those whom the king pardons he subdues. Ah! dear friends, enquire if Christ is your King, by his subduing you. How happy are those of you who can say, Christ is my King! Dear friends, enquire if you are under this third crown. The third is the sweetest of all. He wears all his crowns for this one.

It is interesting to notice that in the first ages of the Church, Christians were martyred for the priestly office of Christ; at the reformation they were martyred for his prophetic office; and it is reserved, it may be, for us to be martyred for his kingly office: it was this, you remember, the Covenanters were martyred for. How necessary then, to be found on the right side.

Thursday Evening; 26th January, 1843

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