

MESSIAH THE PRINCE,

Or, The Mediatorial Dominion of Jesus Christ.

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Sabbath Afternoon Studies: Part 5.

CHAPTER 4.

APPOINTMENT OF CHRIST TO MEDIATORIAL DOMINION.

THIS is a topic of great importance, and deserving of being fully investigated and distinctly understood.

1. Christ was *formally* appointed to the kingly office *by his Father from all eternity in the covenant of grace*. ‘Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.—I appoint unto you a kingdom, as MY FATHER HATH APPOINTED UNTO ME:—As the Father hath life in himself, so hath HE GIVEN to the Son to have life in himself; and hath GIVEN HIM AUTHORITY to execute judgment also because he is the Son of man.’¹ It belonged to the Father to do this formally, as the representative of Deity in the economy of redemption. Absolutely speaking, Christ’s appointment proceeded from the sovereign act of the divine will essentially considered. The designation of all the divine persons to their respective economical characters and offices, can only be referred to such an act. To conceive it as proceeding from the Father necessarily or originally, is at variance with the perfect *equality* subsisting among the divine persons themselves. It must, therefore, be viewed as flowing *absolutely from God essentially considered* in the first instance; and, then, that of the Son and the Holy Spirit as proceeding *formally from the Father*, in whom all power and authority have been economically vested for this end. ► To him, therefore, the formal appointment of the Mediator to government or rule must be ascribed. This formal appointment took place in the covenant of grace. ‘I have made a COVENANT with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy THRONE to all generations.’ [Psalm 89.3,4.] It took place from eternity—in anticipation of the fall and consequent helplessness and danger of man. Hence, after the announcement ‘Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion,’ it is added, ‘I will declare the DECREE: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.’ [Psalm 2.6,7.] To the same purpose is the declaration—‘I was set up FROM EVERLASTING, from the beginning, or ever the earth was,’ [Prov. 8.23]: while he who was to be ‘Ruler in Israel’ was spoken of by Micah as having his ‘goings forth from of old, from everlasting.’ [Mic. 5.2.] How solemn and indubitable this act of formal appointment!

2. Christ’s appointment from eternity to the kingly office, was *significantly intimated, in the fulness of time, by the unction of his human nature*. In order to our feeling an interest in, and

1 Psalm 2.6; Luke 22.29; John 5.26,27.

becoming acquainted with, what took place in the everlasting covenant, it required to be made known. This was effected by his being solemnly anointed. To anoint, was the ancient way of denoting regal designation. 'The trees went forth on a time *to anoint* a king over them.—The bramble said unto the trees, If in truth you *anoint* me king over you.—Samuel also said unto Saul, The Lord sent me *to anoint* thee to be king over his people, over Israel.—Thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee.—The house of Judah have *anointed* me king over them. *Anoint* Hazael to be king over Syria.'² ► Similar language is used respecting Christ: 'Yet have I set (Heb. *anointed*) my king upon my holy hill of Zion. God, thy God, hath *anointed* thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I *anointed* him. I have ordained a lamp for mine *anointed*. Of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast *anointed*, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together. How God *anointed* Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power.'³ What idea was intended to be conveyed by this phraseology, the passages formerly quoted enable us to determine. ► There cannot be a doubt, that regal appointment is designed by the unction which Jesus is said to have received; an unction which consisted not, as in the case of kings among men, of literal oil and aromatic perfumes applied to the body by the hand of a prophet, but of the Spirit of grace poured out upon him in rich abundance by the Father. This was the 'holy oil, the oil of gladness,' with which he was anointed 'above his fellows.' These expressions may refer, in part, to his blessed qualifications; but they must be viewed principally as denoting his authoritative appointment, in respect of which, all his garments may be said to 'smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces.'

3. Christ's appointment was still farther intimated by his *actual investiture with regal power at and after his resurrection*. This might be called the inauguration solemnity of the mediatorial King. What took place in the counsels of eternity was made known in the fulness of time; but it was still more largely and clearly exhibited when the Son of God rose from the dead. The kingly office of Christ being essential to the mediatorial character, must of course have existed from eternity, and must also have been exercised from the beginning of time; yet the Scriptures speak of it as conferred in reward of his obedience unto death. 'Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.' [Phil. 2.8-10.] ► Its having been conferred at his resurrection may seem inconsistent with having existed from the beginning. They are, however, both true. The Holy Spirit always existed in the church, and yet was not given until Christ was glorified. After Christ was glorified there was a more copious manifestation, a more full dispensation of the Spirit. In like manner, at his resurrection, there was a more ample display, a more extensive exercise of Christ's regal power. His power was, from the first, exercised on the footing of his

2 Judges 9.8,15; 1 Sam. 15.1; 16.3; 2 Sam. 2.7; 1 Kings 19.15.

3 Psalm 2.6; Psalm 45.7; Psalm 89.20; Psalm 132.17; Acts 4.27; 10.38.

meritorious death. But when the death had really occurred, it was fitting that there should be a display of the power which resulted from it, and which had all along a regard to it. In short, the exercise of the kingly office *before* and *after* Christ's resurrection, bear much the same relation to one another, as the exercise of the same office before and after the coronation of an earthly king. ► The ceremony of coronation makes a public, solemn, august display of the sovereign's investiture with regal power; but the power itself existed before;—in an hereditary government, from the moment of the demise of his predecessor; in an elective government, from the time of his being chosen by the people. After the resurrection of our Redeemer from the grave, there was a more full, explicit, and expressive recognition than before of his appointment to mediatorial rule. Then did it appear that all power was given unto him in heaven and in earth. 'His being by the right hand of God exalted,' was the means of 'letting all the house of Israel know assuredly that God had made that same Jesus whom men had crucified both Lord and Christ' (Acts 2.33,36). 'When he raised him from the dead, he set him at his own 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 in that which is to come' (Eph. 1.21,22). ► 'When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high' (Heb. 1.3). He was King from eternity; from the entrance of sin into our world he exercised the regal functions; in the lowest depths of his humiliation, occasional signs of dignity and power appeared. But not until his resurrection from the dead and ascension to the throne of the Father, was his investiture with this power publicly and formally recognised. Then, however, did his regal splendour come out from the cloud of obscurity in which it had been formerly wrapped; his diadem shone forth with transcendent lustre; his sceptre, the weight of which had before been comparatively unfelt, began now to be wielded with new power; angels sang his coronation anthem:—

'Ye gates, lift up your heads on high;
Ye doors that last for aye,
Be lifted up that so the king
Of glory enter may;'

And, amid the loud acclaim of these celestial attendants, he ascended his throne, and entered on the formal administration of his kingdom.

4. This appointment is *attested by many distinct and indubitable witnesses*. The Father gives formal proof of the fact, when he says, 'Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion' (Psalm 2.6.) The Saviour himself bears this testimony, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth' (Matt. 28.18.) The spirit of Old Testament prophecy declared, 'I beheld 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: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed' (Dan. 7.13,14.) ► Apostles, under the New Testament, concur in

the evidence they furnish: 'God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name' (Phil. 2.9.) And every creature in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, are heard saying, 'Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever' (Rev. 5.13.) Such united, harmonious, unequivocal testimonies, leave us no room to doubt the interesting fact, and render inexcusable every feeling of scepticism on the subject.

Yet, this matter is not without its difficulties.

The appointment of Christ to the kingly office has been represented as inconsistent with his divinity. It is supposed to imply inferiority. But the economical character of the Son removes the difficulty at once. It is not as God absolutely considered, that it takes place; but as Mediator. In this capacity it is easy to suppose him invested with authority; and, considering the deep humiliation to which he voluntarily submitted in this character, there can be no difficulty whatever in understanding either the fact or the nature of his exaltation.

Nor did he, in assuming the mediatorial kingdom, divest himself of anything belonging to him as God. This it were impiety to suppose. Deity is unchangeable. His being, perfections, character, and government, as God, remained the same as they ever were. They might be obscured in appearance, but they were the same in reality. His moral authority over all creatures could never be laid aside. It is essential to his very being and character. The mode of its exercise only was changed: it was now administered in an economical instead of an absolute character, for the good and salvation of his church.

Neither does the appointment of Christ to the regal office suppose that God is deprived of that necessary and essential dominion which belongs to him. If it does not take from Christ his own essential power as God, it cannot be understood as taking it from God absolutely considered. 'That springs naturally from the inseparable relation subsisting between God and his creatures. The delegation of power does not suppose the surrender of it, on the part of him from whom the delegation proceeds. When a king appoints a plenipotentiary to act for him, he does not divest himself of the inherent right to reign. And if this is the case where the person appointing and the persons appointed are essentially different, why should we find any difficulty in a case where they are 'the same in substance, and equal in power and glory?' Nay, so far from God's essential dominion being subverted by the mediatorial appointment, it might easily be shown to be confirmed and established by it in a variety of particulars.

If the view given, in this chapter, of the appointment of Christ to mediatorial power be correct, there can be no difficulty in understanding how his regal acts were possessed of validity in the earliest ages of the church. This appointment had, as we have seen, a special respect to his death; it was conferred as the reward of his sufferings; and, hence, he was not fully inaugurated till after his resurrection. Still, the administration of mediatorial rule existed from the time of the entrance of sin into our world. The Son of God then entered on the administration of all his mediatorial functions; on this, as well as others. The voice of the Lord

God, walking in the garden in the cool of the day, announced him as a *prophet*: the institution of sacrifices, which there is reason to think was coeval with the fall of man, exhibited him as a *priest*: and the warfare betwixt the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, which then commenced, unfolded his *regal* character. ► In this latter capacity, he never ceased afterwards to act. The formation of the church in Eden; the translation of Abel's righteous soul to glory; the re-organisation of the church with Noah; the covenant made with Abraham, and renewed with Isaac and Jacob; the establishment of the Jewish economy under Moses; the many interpositions made on behalf of the armies of Israel, by which they were rendered victorious over their enemies; the appointment of judges; and the raising up of kings in the line of David, to dispense the benefits of civil government to God's ancient people—are all so many regal acts of Prince Messiah. Accordingly, when he came in the flesh, he was recognised, not as entering upon, but as in the full possession of, royal prerogatives: 'Where is he that IS BORN KING of the Jews? [Matt. 2.2.] ► And, even during the period of his humiliation, as has been before remarked, he claimed and received royal honours, as well as performed regal acts. Now, what we have said regarding his appointment, shows the validity of all these acts from the beginning. His appointment took place in the eternal counsels. It was, therefore, not only what he did after his resurrection, but all the acts which preceded it, that were possessed of valid authority. His sovereignty must never be doubted. Whether he erects or destroys, plants or plucks up, kills or makes alive, implicit submission is due to his righteous sceptre; we must acknowledge his title to do according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and, instead of seeking to impede the regular flow of his administration, it becomes us to shout from the heart, 'O King, live for ever.'

Christ's appointment gives him a rightful claim to the implicit and conscientious obedience of every moral creature. 'Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the truth of God perfected.' [1 John 2.3-5.] It is as mediatorial King that all his commands are given, and in this capacity is it that he is to be obeyed. Let men be convinced of this. He is no usurper. Great must be the guilt of refusing him submission; it is to resist lawful authority, to reject the appointment of God.

This appointment affords ample security for the overthrow of all Christ's enemies, and the ultimate establishment of his kingdom in the world. Has God appointed him to rule, and shall any one be able to hinder his success? No; we have, in this, sufficient security that no opposition shall ever be able to prevent the progress of his reign. The counsel of the Lord, it shall stand. The heathen may rage, and the people imagine a vain thing; the kings of the earth may set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder and cast their cords from us. But, having respect to the decree by which he has been set King on the holy hill of Zion, He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision; he shall break them with a rod of iron, he shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel; and the heathen shall be given to him

for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. ► Much reason, then, have the people of God to rejoice in the appointment of Christ to mediatorial dominion. Let them make themselves intelligently acquainted with the evidence by which it is supported, and exult in the stability of the foundation on which it rests—a foundation which no force of earth or hell can ever overthrow. ‘The Lord said unto my Lord, Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies; thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.’

Discussion Questions

1. When may we say that Christ the Mediator was formally appointed to the kingly office?
A.
2. Should the appointment of Christ as King only be viewed as an act of the Father?
A.
3. In what way was Christ’s eternal appointment to the kingly office manifested in the fullness of time?
A.
4. When was there a more-observable actual investiture with regal power for the more thorough manifesting of that authority given to Christ?
A.
5. What analogy will help us understand how Christ both possessed regal authority before his resurrection, and was definitively or fully inaugurated in the exercise of that power after his resurrection?
A.
6. Who are all witnesses to the fact that Christ is appointed to be king?
A.
7. What answer or resolution should be considered when men represent the appointment of Christ to a kingly office as inconsistent with his divinity?
A.
8. What authority or power is surrendered by God, absolutely considered, in the appointing of Christ to be a Mediatorial king?
A.
9. Given the views considered in this chapter, what does it help us better understand about the past?
A.
10. As a final consideration, in view of all the opposition men make to the LORD’s Christ, what else should be seen as secured by his appointment to his kingly office?
A.