

MESSIAH THE PRINCE,
Or, The Mediatorial Dominion of Jesus Christ.
By William Symington.
Sabbath Afternoon Studies: Part 1.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE present may be regarded as a sequel to the work on the Atonement and Intercession of Christ, published by the author some few years ago. The subjects, as will be seen from the introductory pages of this volume, have an intimate connexion with each other. The glory of the divine Redeemer is deeply involved in both. The writer is not aware of the existence of any work on the exact plan of that now offered to the public. It has been his object to present a condensed, yet comprehensive, view of the nature, properties, extent, and duration, of the kingdom of the Messiah.

Two departments—the church and the nations—have received a large share of attention. But their paramount importance, apart from other considerations, is sufficient to account for this, and to render any apology unnecessary. In adverting, as was unavoidable in the discussion of these topics, to questions that are keenly agitated at the present time, the author has studied to keep clear of all allusion to matters, purely of a party nature, which have been unhappily mingled up with the discussion of a great and vital principle. ► Having no party purpose whatever to serve, he hopes he may have been enabled to escape, in some considerable degree at least, that bitterness of feeling, and obliquity of judgment, which the spirit of party naturally engenders. It is one of the painful and unhappy results of controversy, especially when it happens to involve points in which the immediate interests of the respective parties are supposed to be concerned, that it is almost sure so to pervert the mind, and awaken animosities, as to be greatly unfavourable to the detection and establishment of truth.

The author commits his work to the candid judgment of all who love that Redeemer, whose princely glory he has attempted to delineate; and to the promised blessing of the Spirit of Christ, who can give efficacy to the feeblest of human efforts.

W.S.

CHAPTER 1.
NECESSITY OF CHRIST'S MEDIATORIAL DOMINION.

THE question of Paul, *Is Christ divided?* is one to which professing Christians have not given sufficient heed, and the evil consequences are abundantly apparent.

It was deemed essential to the salvation of men that their Redeemer should possess the powers at once of a prophet, a priest, and a king. These offices, while essentially distinct, are

necessarily and inseparably connected with one another. Such a union has been by some utterly denied; and its denial has laid foundation for some capital errors, which have exerted a pernicious influence on the Christian church. By others it has been criminally overlooked; and the neglect with which it has been treated has occasioned vague and conflicting conceptions regarding the great work of man's deliverance from sin and wrath by the mediation of the Son of God.

If, as we presume will be readily admitted, the whole of Christ's offices are necessary to the salvation of fallen man, it follows that they are all essential to the character of the Saviour, and that, of course, we cannot suppose him to have existed for a moment without any one of them, as this would suppose him to have been, for the time at least, no Saviour. This fearful result might itself be deemed sufficient to put Christians on their guard against fancying either that Christ was invested with his different offices at different times, or that he acts at one time according to one and at another time according to another. From the very first he must have possessed the powers of all his offices; and in every part of his work all must have come into operation. ► For example, when he taught his disciples, he acted not only as a prophet, but also as a priest and a king; inasmuch as the doctrine which he taught brought fully to view his sacerdotal character, and the authority with which his instructions were enforced distinctly recognised his regal power. Again, when as a priest he offered himself a spotless sacrifice to God, he gave to the world as a prophet a new revelation of the character of God, and of the principles of the divine moral government; at the same time that as a king he triumphed gloriously over his enemies. In like manner, his royal achievements not only manifest his majesty and his power, but serve to publish the clemency of his grace, and to recognise the merit of his atoning sacrifice as the ground on which they proceed.

This doctrine of inseparable union does not by any means confound the distinction subsisting between the various offices of our Mediator, any more than the union of persons in the Godhead amounts to a denial of the essential distinction between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; or than the union of natures in the person of the Son of God is at variance with the ascription, by the inspired writers, of some things to the one nature, and of other things to the other nature. Without confounding the distinction between them, we may, therefore, safely maintain the inseparable union of Christ's mediatorial offices—a union which obtained in every pain he endured, and in every act he performed or will ever perform in behalf of the elect; and which it becomes the believer joyfully and gratefully to recognise and acknowledge, as the absence of any one of them would disqualify him for performing the work of our redemption.

In proceeding to consider the kingly office of Christ, it is to be borne in mind that it stands in inseparable connexion with his sacerdotal office. He sits *a Priest upon his throne*. Nor will any enlightened subject of Sion's King feel that there is any incongruity, in his case at least, between the mitre and the crown, the altar and the throne, the censer and the sceptre, the smoking incense and the shout of victory. 'We have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens. This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sin, for ever sat down on the right

hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.’ [Heb. 4.14; 10.12,13.]

The kingly office of Christ forms an interesting part of the Christian system, and as such both merits and requires extensive illustration. We may judge of its importance from the frequency with which Christ is spoken of in the sacred writings under the character of a King. Is the advent of Messiah announced to the ancient church? It is in these words: ‘Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee.’ [Zech. 9.9.] Are the members of the church invited to behold his excellences? Such is the character in which he is discovered: ‘Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold KING Solomon, with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.’ [Cant. 3.11.] ► Is a gracious discovery of the Saviour promised? It is thus conveyed: ‘Thine eyes shall see the KING in his beauty.’ [Isa. 33.17.] Are the saints required to exult in the Redeemer? It is in these terms: ‘Let the children of Zion be joyful in their KING.’ [Pslam 149.2.] Does the believer record the effect produced by some singular manifestation of the divine presence to his soul? This is his language: ‘Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the KING, the Lord of hosts.’ [Isa. 6.5.] ► Or is the church required to celebrate the ascension of her Lord? In strains borrowed from the triumphant entrance of an earthly monarch into the capital of his kingdom, she exclaims: ‘Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the KING of glory shall come in.’ [Psalm 24.7.] Such being the frequent allusion made in the Scriptures to this particular feature of the Saviour’s character, an examination into the mediatorial government of Christ presents peculiar attractions to every true disciple of Jesus; and as the theme is ample, as well as inviting, it requires the patient, candid, and believing attention of all who would be wise unto salvation.

The sovereign authority of Christ may be viewed either as *necessary*, or as *official*. Viewing him as *God*, it is necessary, inherent, and underived: viewing him as *Mediator*, it is official and delegated. It is the latter of these we are now to contemplate. The subject of our present inquiry is, the MEDIATORIAL DOMINION of the Son; not that which essentially belongs to him as God, but that with which, by the authoritative act of the Father, he has been officially invested as the Messiah. It is that government, in short, which was *laid* upon his shoulders—that power which was given unto him in heaven and in earth.

In proceeding to the consideration of this interesting and momentous subject, the first thing which claims attention is the NECESSITY of Christ’s kingly office. This takes precedence of all other points, inasmuch as its establishment will tend to prepare for the more careful investigation of the other parts of the subject, by impressing the mind with a higher sense of its importance. ‘*For he MUST reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.*’ (1 Cor. 15.25).

1. The kingly office of Christ is necessary to the *fulfilment of God’s gracious purposes* respecting the elect. The right of dominion over all things necessarily belongs to him as God. Had his kingdom embraced nothing but the material and the moral worlds, generally

considered, there should have been no room, because no need, for the mediatorial rule, all the purposes of his government being perfectly subserved by his essential control as God. But there is something else than the material and moral world, generally considered, under the government of the Almighty. ► Man, having broken the original moral constitution under which he was placed, and become liable, in consequence, to judicial displeasure and punishment, and God having determined to rescue a number of the human family from the fearful consequences of such a state, that this might be done honourably and successfully, it became necessary that the government of these, and of others on their account, should be committed to him who was chosen to be their Saviour. God, from the very perfection of his nature, could not, in his absolute character, deal with rebel sinners in any way with a view to their salvation. In this character he must seek their punishment, for he is just: and not only could he not procure or offer pardon and deliverance from the curse of the broken covenant, but he could not even bestow it, nor could he actually deliver them, or conduct them to any of the blessings of salvation. Hence the necessity of another being appointed, not only to purchase and to offer redemption through his blood, but to apply it, to give it effect, to bestow the benefits of grace on the destined subjects of salvation.

Discussion Questions

1. What other topic may be considered as having an intimate connection with the topic of the Kingdom of the Messiah?

A.

2. For what purpose does Dr. Symington remind us of Paul's Question, *Is Christ Divided?*

A.

3. Should we conceive of any of Christ's mediatorial offices being exercised as first, without the others?

A.

4. What passages of Scripture does our author cite to illustrate the inseparable connection between Christ's kingly and priestly offices?

A.

5. What Psalm speaks in impressive language about the Messiah, calling us to welcome him as our King?

A.

6. What are the two distinct ways in which we may view the Messiah as having the authority of a sovereign?

A.

7. Why was it necessary that the Son of God deal with rebel sinners to effect the divine purposes of grace?

A.