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Substance of Two Sermons preached by our Pastor
on May 28, 1979. 142nd Anniversary Services.

Afternoon Lesson. Philippians 2.

Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. Acts 2. 33.

We may say immediately in the Name of the Lord, this sacred Scripture and wonderful Text is like a sequel to the discourses of the Lord's Day, when the sacred subject was the ascension of our blessed Redeemer to Heaven. Here we have the amazing account of His exaltation in the third Heavens, and what was and is consequent on it. We must preface the discourse in this way: we are deeply conscious of the truth of the language in the Hymn; (177)

"Living tongues are dumb at best;
We must die to speak of Christ."

The subject is very sacred, wonderful, tremendous. I wish to say the subject is one of the greatest concern and interest for poor, needy, quickened, longing, thirsting sinners because the ascension and exaltation of the blessed Redeemer is a grand, glorious proof of the accomplishment of His priestly work of atonement, and all is for poor sinners, chosen, loved, blessed by Him.

One feels it would be desirable to make mention, before we come to the steps of His exaltation, that this is a subject for the delight of redeemed souls. The exaltation of the dear Redeemer fills Heaven with praise, and it will fill your souls with praise if you have the assurance of your interest in all He accomplished and now fulfils in His heavenly ministry of mediation, intercession, advocacy and glorious Kingship; the exercise of sovereign, almighty power in reigning. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." and you will need for Him to exercise power in and for you, and toward those you pray for, and in His Church, - this Church on our anniversary day, and in the nation.

I will speak briefly, though our souls would ever dwell on this and

we derive salvation from it. I will refer again to the lowest part of His humiliation: you will know the reason^{for} it, His infinite stoop, His condescension to the lowest part of the earth. The grand and glorious purpose was that He should become Substitute and Surety; to make atonement for sins, to give His life, rise from the tomb on the third day, and bring us into eternal relationship with Himself by assuming a holy humanity so we might partake of His divine nature. A number of you in the Sanctuary here know these things. You are

"In union with the Lamb,
From condemnation free," (921)

The Name of Jesus is above every name in preciousness. The lowest part of His humiliation was His burial. He gave His life voluntarily and was buried, so there is one point to make; namely, why did He condescend to be buried? To enter the territory of death, to remove the sting of death for His people: to permanently remove terror from the grave, and to sanctify the grave. When Jesus rose from the tomb the sting of death was eternally removed. There is no sting in death to the people of God. "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." The Lord removed the sting by suffering the curse Himself, and the curse entered His very soul, and as we said yesterday referring to Swain's Hymn, wrath spent itself on Him till there was none left.

"Divinity's indwelling rays

Sustained Him till nature was dead." (159)

He thus expiated our sins. How wonderful! When you think of dying and your grave, there comes a point in the spiritual experience of a child of God when the holy doctrine is operative in the experience, the fear of death is removed. Some here may be subject to bondage because of the fear of death: it has never been removed. If you are brought into the spiritual experience to have translated the doctrine enunciated, you will know what it is to be delivered from the fear of death. Has the Lord removed from you the fear of death? It is a bondage many of the

Lord's people live in and under for years: they cannot rise above it. The Lord knows how to remove it permanently. So when He rose from the tomb the sting of death had gone for ever. All terror had gone from the grave. You know what it is to be terrified: some people are paralysed by a severe thunderstorm. There is the terror of the grave. When the Lord Jesus rose on the third day He took the terror from the grave. What is it? It relates to the curse; the fear of the curse. The Lord has removed terror from the grave, and when He does it in your soul it will be by His dying, forgiving love, pardon and peace, and it will be an experience of the glorious power of His resurrection.

My third point. He took the terror of the grave by being in it for three days. He sanctified it by His very presence in it.

"There the dear flesh of Jesus lay,
And left a long perfume." (466)

If you want to know the meaning of it, He made it a sacred place, for death and the grave are as the porter and the gate to Heaven to the people of God. You can see the wonder of it. He condescended to be buried, and in sanctifying the grave He lined it with His love and blood and made it 'a downy bed'. He lined it with precious promises. "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" eternally. "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall ^{they} arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." And the beautiful Hymn; "One in the tomb; one when He rose." for His people were with Him virtually in the tomb, and now as He is exalted in Heaven. So you see the wonder of it. Christ is risen. Why? Because of the virtue and validity of all He did as High Priest, and because of its acceptance by His Father. All He promised to do He had accomplished; a holy righteousness wrought, honour restored to the law, the sins of His people expiated. He had suffered the curse and atoned for sin by the fountain of rich blood and cleansed the Church by pure water, - "The fountain is one" He rose triumphantly on the third day; the debt paid, the victory won. There is something so sacred and precious concerning the tomb of Christ: there is something wonderful concerning the graves

of all His saints. The grave is referred to as 'the peaceful tomb'. I remember when the dear Lord delivered me and I anticipated entering Heaven, I began to contemplate what was between me and Heaven. It was discovered to me, dying, and it was as though I looked into my grave: there was no darkness or gloom; there was whiteness, glory. Some of you will appreciate this. O the sacredness! I have said, (it is not always to the same degree,) but I have said when the dear saints of God are laid to rest the funeral service is like a wedding service. Instead of being dark and sombre it has been white robes, purity, songs of rejoicing, called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Some of my happiest times have been in conducting the funeral services of saints. After all, it is the end of the ministry to edify the Body of Christ; to fit the people of God for Heaven. It is the object of your faith; it is all you hope for; it is a crown. O the wonder of the death and burial of Christ!

So His resurrection is the first step of His exaltation. I do not want to repeat myself unnecessarily. You will know not only from the divine record, the infallible Word of God, but from the spiritual experience of the same, the risen Saviour was a Man of joy, not sorrow. All His sorrows were over, His travail past. He had brought forth His Church as in the Canticles, "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense." He says as He rises from the tomb and sees His Church He travailed for and brought forth, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee."- a Man of holy joy. In passing I will just refer to this: you will remember after His resurrection not an enemy touched Him, and it would appear that not an enemy saw Him in all the forty days. It was only His dear disciples, only those in Covenant bonds with Him on the earth, and then according to His pleasure He showed Himself to them. Try to assess the magnitude of the divine blessing if the Lord shows Himself to you! You may contemplate as to the favoured poor sinner you are. It is the grandest thing that ever takes place on earth, for Jesus to show Himself to you so you behold His glory, The beginning of Heaven is in your soul, and you long ^{for it}, if you fear God. His glorious Resurrection, the first step of His exaltation proved the wondrous virtue, efficacy and validity of all He had done.

What of His ascension and exaltation? There are several things to mention in a reverent, humble and gracious manner. What was the meritorious cause of His exaltation? Let me name several things. The first meritorious cause of His exaltation was His humiliation. That is why I read the Lesson where I did, and you will see the beauty and worth of the language. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And 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." When the Lord Jesus was at the bar of the high priest He said, "Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God." Think of it! He was at the bar of the high priest, accused and condemned: presently He was exalted at the right hand of the Father. O the majesty of the Lord Jesus! So the meritorious cause of His ascension and exaltation was His humiliation, - the holy perfection of all He accomplished in it, - the infinite merit of His glorious Person and of His work. I feel in my soul I want to dwell on this because it is strong meat. If you are hungry it is immortal meat to your soul. When the Lord Jesus rose on the third day there were several things to observe. I referred to one yesterday. He passed from under the law as to its penal and federal relationship with Him. He passed from under the burden and curse of the law, and entered into a righteous relationship with the law as One who had magnified, fulfilled and restored ~~and~~ honour to it. I thought this morning, as helped I will enunciate the holy doctrine, but the great thing is to see how it is translated into spiritual experience, and how it affects our souls.

If I make a comment, how will you know divine doctrine? It is very needful to know. It is well and according to the wisdom of God in the distribution of gifts to His Church, that there should be teachers. It would be sad for the Church of God if there were no teachers. Mr Popham and Mr Gosden were great teachers: I wish we had valued them more than we did; that is often the trouble. The point is, holy doctrine is as a

framework. It is Christ. How do you know it? My living, spiritual experience of the same. It is not like taking a Text Book and filling the mind with the mdiments and to be able to recite them and have no heart, no substance, no life in the soul to understand these things. It is in vital, living experience we learn holy doctrine. The Lord Jesus passing from under the law in a penal sense came into a righteous relationship with it. Is not tthis made a vital, spiritual experience to the people of God? Is it not operative in your souls? Do you not pass from a state of felt condemnation in a spiritual application of the law to grace? You are not under the law, but under grace. It is wonderful to be delivered from condemnation, error, terror, darkness, confusion, bondage, and brought into the sweet light and holy liberty of the gospel. It is because Christ did what He did. It is wonderful to me the substance there is in all this. He exercised abundantly, in a plenary sense all the divine attributes with which His sacred human nature was invested in His incarnation. He said before He ascended, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Obviously you will seek wisdom to understand this, for as to His eternal Sonship and Deity nothing could be added to Him. It was in relation to the Man Christ Jesus,- all power. Wondrous this is. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." And something that so considerably related to His exaltation in Heaven is, all He did from His birth to His death,- we may say, to the time when He triumphantly said, "It is finished," all He did was full of merit. What did He merit? All the blessings of salvation He had wrought for His chosen people. In His resurrection and exaltation He became possessed with the blessings of salvation for His people by His priestly work of atonement. It is wonderful. You get the unfolding of it in, "Peace I leave with you, my peace; peace I purchased and merited by my agony to give you. Blessed be God.