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Substance of Prayer Meeting Address. August 30. 1983.

Lesson. Exodus 15. 23-27.

The amazing alternation of the path of a child of God is before us in the chapter and in the previous chapter, when the Lord so remarkably delivered the children of Israel from the wrath and malice of Egypt and performed the miracle of dividing the waters of the Red Sea. It was the Lord leading them forth by the right way, and He will lead you if you are His. (You will be in a dilemma; there appears to be no way at all; no possibility of deliverance. This is a word of spiritual exhortation to the people of God. There may be no way open before you. You could go back, but "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." It is pressing toward the mark. You have no wish to turn to the left hand or to the right, but to follow the path of God's directing. It may be sealed; you only see it in the finality of it. Anticipate, you with living faith - the smallest grain of faith - anticipate miracles. God performs miracles. There may be no way visible to you; no way forward, to the right or left, or back. (Because of the preciousness of the Saviour and His accomplished work of redemption and priestly work of mediation and intercession this Prayer Meeting is made possible, and it is a demonstration of one truth:) there is always one way open, that is up. What have you been doing tonight, looking down? No. Up to Heaven, to the Mediator. That way is always open. The Lord may hide His face if we are guilty of grieving His Spirit, but the Throne of Grace is always open.

God delivered the Israelites. "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward... Fear ye not stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." Triumphantly they knew the passage through the Red Sea. You will see why I referred to alternation: immediately it was all praise. It is wonderful when the Church of God is full of praise. The song of Moses and Miriam was all filled with praise. What do you think? There are a number of you here if the Lord is pleased to answer prayer, there will be a whole family

filled with praise, especially if you have abundant proof of the salvation of all your children. So the Lord does great things for you, whereof you are glad. God has this to give. If you have a living hope you cannot tell me you are destitute of a wonderful expectation. The two things go together; a vital, living hope and a glorious expectation, founded on the truth of God, His character, Being, as words so precious to you written in your heart. Don't be afraid to praise God. Some seem shy of ^{are} Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in ^{the} Sion." Some think it is not orthodox. "Praise ye the Lord." You will praise Him if His love flows into your soul. It will not be a dirge. "Whoso offereth praise ~~glorifieth~~ glorifieth me." It is wonderful to praise the Lord when your heart is melted, broken, and it flows out in love, gratitude, praise, adoration.

What is the alternation? It took them by surprise. They came to a place - you will see it on your spiritual map - a place called Marah. Naomi came there. This is highly symbolic, full of divine teaching. There is a distinctive feature concerning Marah. We need water. We need the water of Life to cleanse and refresh us. The water was bitter; a symbol of the bitter things a child of God passes through. It is painful and distressing and you do not know how to drink it. How well we know what it is to come there. See the wonderful provision of the Lord, and the wonderful work of the Spirit of God in the soul. It is this. He grants submission to His will. He favours you to fall into His blessed hands with a penitent spirit. See the cross of Christ; the cup so bitter. "How bitter that cup, no heart can conceive,

Which He drank quite up that sinners might live!"

There is a divine, sacred revelation. There is a tree. What a prophecy! a gibbet of wood on which the Saviour voluntarily hung and was crucified. My friends, it is the cross of Christ and the fruit of His vicarious sufferings and Passion that make your bitter waters sweet. Get a glimpse of the Saviour and that will make your bitter waters sweet. "the waters were made sweet." The love of God, the dying love of Christ is sweet and will make the waters sweet.

The Jewish matron Naomi was so stripped in ten years of her husband and two sons; all she had. Dear Ruth must go back to Bethlehem with her: they did not say much. When they reached Bethlehem "all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi?" There must have

been a mark on her of grief, sadness, distress, She looked old, her face furrowed with grief. She said, "Call me not Naomi - pleasant - call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?" See the faithfulness of our God, The Lord's people do not die like that. She did not say "Call me Mara" on her death bed. I believe she felt so deeply wounded with the hand of the Lord which was just, that she would never be healed. She was. There was great interest in the progress of Ruth. The day came when she was united to Boaz, and a little later by divine appointment, Obed. She saw a greater than Obed, the Saviour. "Lo, sweet Babe, we fall before Thee." She took him in her bosom and that healed her. There was a prophecy for her. "And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, - this will heal your wounds - and a nourisher of thine old age." - Christ; the Babe of Bethlehem. Have you laid the Babe in your bosom? It is Christ. If you have, "I am the Lord that healeth thee." You will stretch out your arms for Him and lay Him in your bosom. Do you think you will be happy? Will you have any diseases or wounds left? Will it be Marah? No. Your life will be restored and your old age nourished. Blessed be God.