**THE EXPOSITION OF HOLY SCRIPTURE BY ALEXANDER MACLAREN**

**EXODUS-013. MARAH by ALEXANDER MACLAREN**

*"23.* *And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. 24. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? 25. And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet..."*

*Exodus 15:23-25*

**I.** The time of reaching Marah--just after the Red Sea. The Israelites were encamped for a few days on the shore to shake themselves together, and then at this, their very first station, they began to experience the privations which were to be their lot for forty years. Their course was like that of a ship that is in the stormy Channel as soon as it leaves the shelter of the pier at Dover, not like that of one that glides down the Thames for miles.

After great moments and high triumphs in life comes Marah.

Marah was just before Elim--the alternation, how blessed! The shade of palms and cool water of the wells, one for each tribe and one for each elder. So we have alternations in life and experience.

**II.** The wrong and the right ways of taking the bitter experience. The people grumbled: Moses cried to the Lord. The quick forgetfulness of deliverances. The true use of speech is not complaint, but prayer.

**III.** The power that changes bitter to sweet. The manner of the miracle is singular. God hides Himself behind Moses, and His miraculous power behind the material agent. Perhaps the manner of the miracle was intended to suggest a parallel with the first plague. There the rod made the Nile water undrinkable. There is a characteristic economy in the miraculous, and outward things are used, as Christ used the pool and the saliva and the touch, to help the weak faith of the deaf and dumb man.

What changes bitter to sweet for us?--the Cross, the remembrance of Christ's death. Consider Him that endured. The Cross is the true tree which, when cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet.

Recognition of and yielding to God's will: that is the one thing which for us changes all. The one secret of peace and of getting sweetness out of bitterness is loving acceptance of the will of God.

Discernment of purpose in God's bitter dealings--for our profit. The dry rod budded. The Prophet's roll was first bitter, then sweet. Affliction afterwards yieldeth the peaceable fruit.