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CONTINUING

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To err is human. To blunder might almost be said to be the peculiar property of, if **Errors and** not the wise man, **Blunders.** yet the man of learning—more or less. There is such a thing as pure error: a blunder is, on the other hand, essentially confusion, and he who blunders is, in the very nature of the case, "mixed." He is not like the lost horse wandering in the steppes: he is like the sleepy horse stumbling in the path. The very core of a blunder is, therefore, incongruity: and it is on this account that it ordinarily strikes us as amusing; for incongruity is the soul of humor. The incongruity may indeed pass beyond the limits of the amusing to the absurd, and may be such as to call out rather indignation than a smile; but in any case, it is the presence of mismatched elements in the phenomenon which raises it from the plane of a mere error into the dignity of a blunder. The late Mr. EDWARD A. FREEMAN, in his inimitable way, genially defines a blunder accordingly thus:—"A blunder is a work of art. An utterly stupid man, an utterly ignorant man, may

make dull mistakes and dull confusions; he cannot make a good blunder. To make a good blunder needs cleverness, and it needs knowledge—imperfect knowledge certainly, but still some knowledge, not utter ignorance." Indeed, it does not always imply ignorance at all,—sleepiness rather. The best blunders are but the nods of Homers; and a Homer is as necessary for their production as the nod.

We see the blunder in its most genial form when no ignorance is argued at all. In **Various Kinds** these cases, it cre-
Of Blunders. ates nothing in the hearer but a diverted smile, in which the perpetrator joins without embarrassment. Instances may be found in Dr. HERRICK JOHNSON'S declaration that Peter "cowered before a barmaid" (Lectures on the New Testament, Etc.: The American Tract Society, 1881, p. 7), and Dr. CHARLES WADSWORTH'S explanation, in one of his printed sermons, that the Epistle to the Colossians "had been penned by two private secretaries, Tychicus and a young colored man, Onesimus." Neither writer so

But we must guard against divorcing the spiritual from the ethical. This false bill of divorcement has blighted many a time and place in the history of the past. Jesus was both spiritually and ethically sovereign; he could not have been either one without the other. He cannot be to-day. Eulogies upon the ethical virtues of Jesus are empty if they lack the reverent homage of the soul. *Christus, si non deus, non bonus*. No man can accept the New Testament narrative as historically true and stop this side of the convinced Thomas' exclamation, "My Lord and my God."

Jesus' self-witness, once accepted, is final. He "claimed" nothing in an offensive or arrogant sense. But he spoke clearly and freely about himself. And truly no man ever spoke as he spoke. Prophets and apostles said, "Thus saith the Lord;" he said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee," and the Greek brings out emphatically the *Ego*. Who else has stood up and invited the whole world to come unto him for rest? "Come unto *me* and *I* will give you rest."

An ethical Christianity, without a sovereignly reigning personal Christ, is a vain thing after all. Humility was his chief human grace; "for I am meek and lowly in heart." But he himself was the inspiration and source of every force that contributes its part to the accomplishment of his work. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." "Because I live, ye shall live also." Christianity is not a system of truth only; it is not an ethical impulse only; it is not a spiritual life only; it is first of all a *Personality*, pervasive, powerful, divinely sovereign; it is the personality of the ever-living, ever-reigning, ever-blessed Christ.

THE SEA OF GALILEE.

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The usual approach to the Sea of Galilee is by the old roadway—deeply worn by the tread of many generations—which leads down from Nazareth, by way of Cana, to Tiberias. From a notable outlook on one of the lower levels in this descent, the traveler gets his first view of the lake and its environs. As seen under a cloudless sky, and in the fresh spring time, from this standpoint—

nearly a thousand feet above the water—the picture is singularly beautiful, as well as deeply impressive. The sweep of vision is limited to the northern half of the Sea, but it includes almost all of the localities, which have been hallowed by the presence and ministry of Jesus.

From the heights of Safed, three thousand feet above the water level, the whole of the mountain-rimmed basin of Galilee may be seen at a glance.

In the Old Testament it is known as the Sea of Chinnereth or Chinneroth; in the Gospels it is called the Lake of Gennesaret, the Sea of Galilee, and the Sea of Tiberias. In John's gospel only do we find the latter name; and this fact has its most natural explanation on the assumption that this apostle wrote after the city of Tiberias had risen to importance, as the capital of Galilee.

The most noteworthy feature of this inland sea is its deep depression. It lies 682 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, and the mountains which gracefully curve around it, shutting it in at every point, except where the Jordan makes its entrance and exit, vary in height from 1,300 to 2,000 feet. On the eastern side the mountains rise abruptly from the plain which borders the lake, to the level of the Bashan plateau; and the general impression is that of a bare rugged wall of rock, cleft here and there by deeply-gashed torrent beds. In these are occasional patches of green, but the prevailing colors are the red and brown of the vast masses of bare basaltic rock.

On the western side the range is broken into rounded hills and grass-covered slopes, which in some places terminate abruptly as they approach the margin of the sea. Between the base of the enclosing hills and the coast line there is an almost continuous belt of green lowland, varying in width from a ribbon-like strip to a generous expanse of one or two miles. "The shore line, for the most part regular, is broken in the north into a series of little bays of exquisite beauty; nowhere more beautiful than at Gennesareth, where the beaches, nearly white with myriads of minute shells, are on one side washed by the limpid waters of the lake, and on the other shut in by a fringe of oleanders, rich in May with their blossoms red and bright."*

Over the rim of the mountain wall northward the prospect is

**Our Work in Palestine*, p. 184.

closed by the towering heights of Hermon. From every outlook south of Magdala the cloudy coronal, and snowy mantle of this majestic mountain may be seen; and at some points it seems so near that it can hardly be distinguished from the contour of the mountain mass which overshadows the margin of the lake.

In outline the Sea of Galilee is an irregular oval, the larger end being at the north. Its extreme length is twelve and a quarter miles. Its greatest width—from Magdala to Khersa (Gergesa)—is six and three-quarter miles. The maximum depth, as ascertained by recent measurements, is one hundred and fifty-six feet. The water is bright and clear, and is almost as delicate a blue as the Bay of Naples. In its ordinary condition it is a water-mirror of rare beauty and reflective power; and the play of the lights and shadows on its surface and surrounding hills, amid the ever-varying atmospheric changes, from sunrise to sunset, greatly enhances the charm of its natural features. In the rich warm glow of the setting sun, which seems to impart to this lake-region a peculiar glory, the beloved Disciple must often have witnessed a counterpart of that scene in holy vision, which he describes as “a sea of glass mingled with fire.”

While Galilee is usually “a calm reposing sea,” it is, nevertheless, subject at times to violent tempests which sweep down through the ravines from the heights above, with scarcely a moment’s notice. Says Dr. Thomson: “Small as the lake is, and placid in general, as a molten mirror, I have repeatedly seen it quiver, and leap and boil like a caldron, when driven by fierce winds from the eastern mountains, and the waves ran high—high enough to fill or cover the ships, as Matthew has it.” Sir Charles Wilson gives a very interesting account of a sudden storm, which he watched from the ruins of Gamala on the eastern side as it swept rapidly across a portion of the sea and lifted the placid waters into a bright sheet of foam. “The effect,” he says, “of half the lake in perfect rest, while the other half was in wild confusion, was extremely grand; it would have fared badly with any light craft caught in mid-lake by the storm; and we could not help thinking of that memorable occasion on which the storm is so graphically described as ‘coming down’ on the lake.”

While the Sea of Galilee abounds, as of old, in choice varieties of fish, the fishing industry, once so important, is well nigh ex-

tinct. The best fishing grounds are still at the northern end, near Capernaum and Tabighah, where the fish sometimes appear in shoals in countless numbers. "The lake absolutely swarms with fish," says Canon Tristram, "and the shoals may often be seen in dark masses, which as their top fins appear on the surface, look at a distance as though a violent shower were rippling the surface for an extent of an acre or more." At the present time there are possibly less than half a dozen rude fishing boats on the lake, but in the time of Christ it was covered with vessels large and small of every description. Ship building was one of the important industries at Tarichaea, a large city south of Tiberias; and here, on one occasion, Josephus collected two hundred and thirty ships, which he manned with sailors, to attack Tiberias from the lake-side.

In a valuable article on the shipping of the Sea of Galilee, Dr. Merrill says: "Josephus' words, in describing different vessels on the Sea of Galilee, are: *Naus*, ship; *ploion*, vessel; *skapha*, a boat smaller than a vessel; *schedia*, a light boat, sometimes a raft; *alias*, fishing boat. *Naus* is used but once in the New Testament, and that in connection with Paul's shipwreck. *Skapha* is used, but only of the boat which belonged to the *ploion*. *Ploion* is the word which the evangelists invariably use of the Sea of Galilee, except in a few instances where, to indicate a vessel of smaller size, they use its diminutive, *ploiaron*. In John 22: 23, *ploiaron* is rendered "boat," but elsewhere, as in Mark 3: 9, "little ship." The authorized Version always renders *ploion* by "ship." In this they are more consistent than the Revisers have been, who in every case in the Gospels (forty-seven times) render it by "boat," while in the Acts and elsewhere they render it by "ship." They can present no reason from grammar, etymology, or textual criticism, to justify them in rendering *ploion* by "ship" when the passage refers to Cesarea-on-the-Sea, and by "boat" when the passage refers to Tiberias or Capernaum. Such passages as Matthew 14: 29, "Peter went down out of the *ploion*," and Mark 6: 51, "Christ went up into the *ploion*," would seem to be sufficient evidence that something else was meant than what English-speaking people ordinarily mean by the term boat."

This argument, so convincingly presented, is in keeping with the fact that some of the vessels, at least, in which Jesus sailed

over the lake were large enough to carry Himself and his disciples—the inference being that *all* of the apostolic band were with Him.

The Jordan descends from Lake Huleh to the Galilean basin, a distance of eleven miles, through a narrow gorge in a succession of rapids or cascades. For the greater part of this distance the descent is more than ninety feet to the mile. From the gateway of the hills the river emerges, a foaming, swirling torrent, crosses the belt of the coast plain, some two miles in breadth, and entering the Sea passes through it, as does the Rhine through the Sea of Constance. For a considerable distance its course may be traced by its turbid waters, but at length it is lost to sight and hushed to rest in the bosom of the lake; and ere it passes out on its downward plunge to the Dead Sea, it is as clear as the waves which ripple along the beach of the Gennesaret plain.

The topography and characteristic features of the coasts of Galilee can be studied to best advantage by making the circuit of the lake. The widest space between the surrounding hills and the water is at or near the inlet of the Jordan. The greater portion of this tract lies on the eastern side of the river, and is known as the Plain of Batihah, or Butaiha. It is somewhat larger than the Gennesaret plain, and is regarded as its counterpart in outline, general appearance and fertility. Near the lake there are numerous bogs and swampy patches, but the higher ground is a meadow-like tract, which yields a rich harvest wherever it is carefully cultivated. This was in the territory ruled by Philip the Tetrarch, and here he rebuilt and beautified the village of Bethsaida, raising it to the dignity of a city and naming it Julias, in honor of the daughter of the reigning Emperor. The probable scene of the miraculous feeding of the multitude was on the eastern edge of the plain, which seems to have been in the past, as it is at the present time, a desert or uninhabited region.

South of the plain of Batihah there is an unbroken border of level coast, seldom less than half a mile in width, which extends to the south end of the lake. The most notable contraction of the coast along this line is at Ghersa, the probable site of Gergesa, directly opposite Magdala on the western side. In the vicinity of this landing-place was the scene of the healing of the fierce demoniac and the destruction of the herd of swine. "The site,"

says Dr. Thomson, "is within a few rods of the shore, and a mountain rises directly above it, in which are ancient tombs; out of some of them the man possessed of the devils may have issued to meet Jesus. The lake is so near the base of the mountain at this place that a herd of swine feeding above it, seized with a sudden panic, would rush madly down the declivity, those behind tumbling over and thrusting forward those before, and, as there is no space to recover on the narrow plain between the base of the mountain and the lake, they would crowd headlong into the water and perish." To this description Dr. Thomson adds the statement that wild hogs abound at this place, and in a state as wild and fierce as though they were still "possessed."

The deepest furrow in the hills on this side is the Wady Fik, which enters the lake three miles below Ghersa. On the precipitous heights above are the ruins of Gamala (Kulat-el Husn), a well nigh impregnable stronghold, famous for the desperate resistance its defenders made to the Romans.

The break in the hills through which the Jordan passes out of the Sea of Galilee is about four miles wide. It issues near the southwest corner and for a short distance runs nearly west. A ruined bridge of ten arches marks the crossing of the old Roman road from Tiberias to Gadara and the regions beyond. West of the Jordan on a little peninsula covered with ruins is the site of Tarichæa, now called Kerak. This is the only position on the coast, says Dr. Smith, which now suits Josephus's description of Tarichæa as washed on more than one side by the sea. From this point to the Hot Springs near Tiberias, a distance of four or five miles, the hills close down to the lake, leaving only a narrow margin of coastland. Tiberias nestles in a semicircular recess, which extends for a mile or more along the shore. Its ruins cover acres of ground, and recent researches have shown that the enclosing wall was nearly three miles in circumference. Between Tiberias and Magdala the hills again come down almost to the water's edge, except at one point where there is a slight expanse at the mouth of a ravine. On this level space some ruins of an ancient town have been found. The proposed identification of this site with Dalmanutha has met with some favor, inasmuch as it seems to have been near the border of Magdala, but there is no *positive* evidence in favor of this identification. The plain of Gennesaret,

as already noted, extends from Magdala to Khan Minyeh. Beyond the spur of rock which forms its northern border lies Tabighah, the probable site of Bethsaida of Galilee. Tell Hum, which Robinson and others have identified with Chorazin, is a mile and a half farther along the coast. A journey of two and a half miles from this site brings us to the Jordan and completes the circuit.

In the time of our Lord not less than nine prosperous cities, with numerous outlying villages and villas, were scattered along this lowland belt. "As the Dead Sea is girdled by an almost countless hedge of driftwood," says Dr. Smith, "so the Sea of Galilee is girdled by a scarcely less continuous belt of ruins,—the drift of her ancient towns."

Dr. Selah Merrill, who spent weeks upon the shores of this silent sea, and had exceptional advantages for the study of its environs, gives the following testimony concerning the remarkable diversity of its natural features: "At every two or three miles of travel a new picture presents itself, so that, were an artist to go around the Sea of Galilee and make a collection of views, illustrating its shores, plains, streams, springs, hills, castles, and grander mountains which look down upon it from a distance, the result would be a wonderful surprise, certainly to those who are not familiar with this region, as showing the variety and beauty of scenes of nature that were constantly before the eyes of our Lord." Amid all the changes and desolations, which have well nigh obliterated the works of man, the outlines and groundwork of its natural features still remain. Its fair expanse of waters, gleaming in the sunlight, like an opal set in emeralds; its pearly beach and charming bays; its rippling wavelets and crystal depths; its encircling plains and outer rim of rugged mountain walls combine to reproduce the very picture, in all its essential details, upon which the eyes of Jesus rested long centuries ago.

There may be other lakes more pleasing to the eye, with surroundings more picturesque or grand, but to the Christian Galilee, made blessedly familiar by the story of the Evangelists, is next to the Holy City—the most hallowed spot on earth. Here by mountain-side and lake-side the Glorious One who came to save preached the gospel of the Kingdom; healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, opened the eyes of the blind; cast out demons, raised the

dead, comforted the sorrowing, gave rest to the weary and heavy laden, calmed the raging winds and waves by a word, and made of the unstable waters a pathway for his feet, that he might come to the help of his imperilled disciples.

"What this lake region has lost in population and activity," says Dean Farrar, "it has gained in solemnity and interest. If every vestige of human habitation should disappear from beside it, and the jackal and the hyena should howl about the shattered fragments of the synagogues where Christ taught, yet the fact that He chose it as the scene of his opening ministry will give a sense of sacredness and pathos to its lonely waters till time shall be no more.

THE VEILED GOSPEL OR THE PARABOLIC TEACHING OF JESUS.

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One of the characteristic features of the teaching of Jesus was its parabolic element. It is noticeable that this method of instruction was not used by Him in His early ministry. Not until some time after the selection of the twelve apostles and the delivery of the Sermon on the Mount, did Jesus change His manner of address to the multitudes, and adopt the parabolic method. The time came when "without a parable spake He not unto them" (Mk. 4: 33). That there must have been a specific reason for this new departure in His work goes without saying, and that reason will be examined later. The disciples immediately noted the change of method, and asked Him, "Why speakest thou unto them in parables?" (Matt. 13: 10). That question proves that the parabolic method was new with Him. Previously, it is true, He had used parabolic sayings (Lk. 4: 23), since such were common among the Jews, but finished parables take their date from well along in the second year of the public ministry of the Master.

But what is a parable? The word signifies something thrown along side of, and the usage of the word shows that this was done for the purpose of comparison and illustration. But how shall the term be more exactly defined? When one attempts a definition, difficulty is immediately encountered, for it is very easy to