

**OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
TEACHING ON THE
LAKE OF GENNESARET**

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Our Lord Jesus Christ teaching on the lake of Gennesaret by Charles Baker

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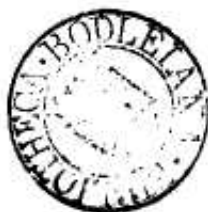
CHARLES BAKER

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OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
TEACHING ON
THE LAKE OF GENNESARET

Six Discourses Suitable for Family Reading

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VICAR OF APPLESHAW, HANTS



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PREFACE.

THIS little work is intended to help ordinary Bible readers to form some definite notion of our Lord's teaching, and the circumstances which lead to such lessons.

Having observed that many persons have a very confused idea of the events in the life of Jesus, it has occurred to me that a clearer view might be obtained by localizing some of the principal events.

The reader is recommended to consult the passages of Scripture referred to at the beginning of each discourse.

I have written for a Village Congregation, with no opportunities of consulting books, and therefore make no pretensions to critical research, but have simply endeavoured to assist

the devotional reflection, and influence the practical conduct, of my hearers.

May the Holy Spirit cause such results in those who read these Discourses !

C. B.

I.

S. MATT. iv. 18—22.

S. MARK i. 16—20.

S. LUKE v. 1—11.

VERY remarkable were the doings of our Saviour on and near this Sea of Galilee, known also as the Sea of Tiberias and the Lake of Gennesaret. Through this lake run the sacred waters of the Jordan, which river continues its course through a desert and falls into the Dead Sea.

It was a Jewish saying, that God loved the Sea of Galilee more than all the other seas. The wonderful fertility of the country about it may have caused this saying; for plants and fruits that naturally require different temperatures and conditions of atmosphere will there flourish luxuriantly, as if God so loved that district as to endue the climate with contradictory qualities. Figs, grapes, nuts, palms, and olives grow in perfection: the lake supplies fish of a kind not to be found any where else; nor are flowers wanting to grace the scene.

The land on the western side of the lake is called the land of Gennesaret; that on the eastern side, the country of the Gergesenes; and what is called Galilee of the Gentiles lies on the north.

In the distribution of the country among the twelve tribes, this favoured tract fell to the share of—

1. Zebulun, who had the land on the west of the lake; of
2. Naphtali, who lived north of it; and
3. Manasseh, who occupied the land on the east of the lake.

Remembering the numerous privileges and opportunities granted by our Saviour in this neighbourhood, we must acknowledge that Isaiah had good reason to sing, "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali . . . by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the Gentiles, the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light¹." This prophecy was spoken to comfort the inhabitants; for they were the first victims of the Assyrian invasion², and are promised as a compensation the best share of Christ's society.

On the north-west of the lake stood Caper-

¹ Isa. ix. 1, 2.

² 2 Kings xv. 29.

naum, which is called the Lord's "own city;" for there Jesus principally lived. In the synagogue, probably built by a Roman centurion³, Jesus often taught. The office of Publican, who collected dues from those crossing the lake, appears to have been held by Levi or Matthew⁴. The inhabitants received little benefit from the advantages they enjoyed; therefore was the city doomed by our Lord: "Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto Heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day⁵." Of this once flourishing town only a few fishing cottages remain.

Two Capernaites have been already mentioned as noble examples of faith and obedience. Matthew, the Publican, who gave up his lucrative trade to follow Jesus; and the Roman centurion, who had more faith and humility than any one else who saw Jesus⁶. Learn, my brethren, however bad an example surrounds you, however few your opportunities, that God will give to the faithful and humble sufficient grace whereby they may witness a good confession.

³ S. Luke vii. 6.

⁴ S. Matt. xi. 23.

⁵ S. Matt. ix. 9.

⁶ S. Matt. viii. 10.

Woes are uttered against two other cities on the Lake of Gennesaret, Chorazin and Bethsaida⁷. In this latter town resided Peter, Andrew, and Philip⁸. The word Bethsaida means "place of fishing." It is on the north-east corner of the lake, just where the Jordan runs into it. Between these two cities is a mountain, where it is thought that Jesus preached His sermon on the Mount, and whither He retired for prayer on the night before His ordination of the twelve Apostles⁹.

In a desert south of Bethsaida, five thousand men were miraculously fed by our Lord with five barley loaves and two fishes¹. Continuing southward on the east side of the lake, we pass through the country of the Gergesenes, where two men possessed with devils were cured². By crossing the lake, we shall reach Magdala, some five miles south of Capernaum. Here was the residence of S. Mary Magdalen³. We might enlarge on all these places; but you will see, by the allusions that have been made, how famous and how blessed was the country about the Lake of Gennesaret. Nor can we fail to

⁷ S. Matt. xi. 21.

⁸ S. Luke vi. 12, 13.

⁹ S. Matt. viii. 20.

¹ S. John i. 44.

² S. Luke ix. 10.

³ S. Luke viii. 2.