

## GEOGRAPHY OF PALESTINE

It is far easier to understand the Bible if one has some understanding of the outstanding features of the geography of Palestine. The Bible is not a book simply of philosophy or of abstract theology but is an account of the way in which God has revealed Himself to men. This revelation took place in human life and in definite places upon the surface of this earth. It cannot be properly understood without some idea of the type of men to whom God spoke and the situations in their lives in connection with which He reveals Himself to them. The Old Testament becomes an entirely different book when one has some knowledge of the places in which the events there described took place. The story of Abram and Lot, for instance, takes on new meaning when one can visualize that place between Bethel and Ai where they were encamped; when one can imagine Abram and Lot walking along that hill country and looking off down into the Jordan Valley far below, seeing the location of Sodom and Gomorrah, seeing where Jericho was and the long stretch of the Dead Sea. One can imagine Abram looking off along that backbone of hill country, looking clear across the valley to the place where Jerusalem, even then, was visible. Jacob's experience at Bethel takes on new meaning if one can visualize his departure from his father. Nearer Beersheba his trip northward passed Hebron, Bethlehem, Jerusalem on up to Bethel. Then down across that Jordan Valley and up the steep cliffs to the east, far on northward into Mesopotamia. The account of the experience of our Lord Himself at Nazareth when the people wanted to throw Him down from a high hill but He escaped out of their midst, takes on new meaning if one understands the location of Nazareth, just a short distance north of the top of those high cliffs which border the plain of Esdraelon. From this incident the cliff has been named the "mount of precipitation".

It is remarkable how small a part the sea plays in the history of ancient Israel.