

THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

Editor

MAURICE HANDFORD

9 Birtlespool Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire SK8 5JZ

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Editorial

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY might well be called a book of remembrance; it was written to bring the people to remembrance at a difficult time of the nation's history. It shows what great things the Lord had done for them in days past and to stir them to gratitude.

God is constantly calling His people to recollection, to think of the past and to realise what He has done, and out of the past to gather lessons of inspiration and hope for the future. Memory is a gift of God and a gift to be cherished. What a mighty effect the memory can have upon us and yet how easily we forget. The Israelites were plagued with short memories, they had forgotten God almost the moment Moses had turned his back.

Moses' purpose was to hearten the people for the future by an appeal to the past. He says that the wilderness experience was designed to teach them self distrust and reliance on God for all the necessities of life. They were to remember all the way that God had led them (8:2). No way explains itself at every step. We cannot always discern God's purpose at the time, often it is only in retrospect and remembrance. All may have seemed wrong to the Israelites when God led them the long way round, but there was a purpose in it.

John Newton, the one-time slave trader, had over his study mantlepiece these words: "Thou shalt remember thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt" (Deuteronomy 15:15). At the end of his life he said: "My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things — I am a great sinner and Christ is a great Saviour."

May we never lose the sense of our immeasurable debt to what God has done for us; may we keep it in our constant remembrance.