

**THE RELIGIOUS
USES OF MEMORY;
A SERMON**

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The religious uses of memory; a sermon by S. Parkes Cadman

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A SERMON

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**THE RELIGIOUS USES OF
MEMORY**

*And thou shalt remember all the way
which Jehovah thy God hath led thee.*

**THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY
EIGHTH CHAPTER, SECOND VERSE**

THE RELIGIOUS USES OF MEMORY

THE book of Deuteronomy is a notable example of the religious uses of memory. It was written during a crisis in the history of the Hebrews, and it is the first serious attempt at a philosophy of that history. The text is at once a statement of its theme and a summary of its main content. It is emphatically the book of remembrance.

Under the guidance and protection of Jehovah, Moses had led the chosen race out of the house of bondage to the verge of the land of their adoption. A disorganized band of fugitives had been transformed into a consolidated people. Their wanderings and privations in the wilderness had imparted a stern but salutary discipline to these spiritless helots. The former slaves of Egypt became the conquerors of Canaan. Despite the fierce resistance of surrounding tribes, they established themselves in a land of fertility and beauty, and their heroic story was transmitted to posterity.

God's purposes in this emancipation and nationalizing of a despised and abject race were infinitely larger than even the Hebrews conceived them to be. He had covenanted with their father Abraham that in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed. From this believing ancestor, whose faith was reckoned onto him for righteousness, there sprang that illustrious line of law-givers, psalmists, and prophets; men who have illuminated mankind with the radiance of their spiritual visions. The religious instinct of the race was to find its highest expression in Israel as a peculiar people, and in its theocracy as the holy commonwealth.

These purposes were enshrined in the Deuteronomic code. But side by side with them is an unsparing portrayal of the repeated apostacies of the Israelites. Their disobedience and disloyalty, their stubbornness and continual backsliding are set over against the signal deliverances which Jehovah had wrought in their behalf. And the punishments which follow these transgressions are depicted with fearful severity.