

In recent meditations on the 78th Psalm, I was struck with the multitude and magnitude of God's wondrous works in the sight of, and in behalf of the children of Israel. These gracious and miraculous works were done in their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, their provision and protection in the Wilderness journey, the victories over their enemies, the conquest and security of the Promised Land as well as God's gracious and perfect instructions, entreaties and warnings by His servants. Yet all of this utterly failed to secure for them the blessings of the Old Covenant and to establish for God a people faithful to Him. They first failed to take all He gave them, then lost it all and were utterly reprobated excepting a small remnant according to the election of grace.

Now the question is often debated as to whether God effectively brings people to repentance and faith by the "carrot" or by the "stick." That is, does His kindness and love exhibited to us in the giving of His Son, all the blessing and goodness of this present life, "the goodness of God (lead) us to repentance," or does He secure repentance and faith by His threats and exhibitions and demonstrations of His wrath and judgments? Another theory is advocated in the present "vineyard" movement, which asserts that the effectual work of God may be secured only with "signs and wonders."

It is evident that none of the above are effectual. In the first place, the "goodness of God" is not doing the job for the man addressed in Romans 2:4. He is going to hell in spite of it, "despising the riches of His goodness, forbearance and long-suffering" and treasuring up for himself wrath." In the second place, neither the special favor shown by God to Israel, nor His wrath for their disobedience, *nor* the multitude of signs and wonders He did in their sight established them in the faith.

The gospel truth is that *no* outward phenomena, not even the preaching of the gospel will bring men to evangelical faith. It is only the effectual working of God's divine power in the heart that makes anything effectual, whether it be God's goodness, His judgment, or His gospel. Israel failed because her *heart* was unchanged.

God fixed all this in the New Covenant by the New Birth and the new heart with His law, His will, the love of Him in the inward man. Our need today is the same as always. *We need God!* Except He come in His person and Power in regenerating graces, we labor in vain.

-C.M.