

A Display of Arminianism

John Owen

Chapter 10

Now let's turn our attention to the soul of man. Where do faith, holiness and sincere obedience come from? All of these graces were purchased by Christ, right? All of these graces are born in us by the working of the Spirit, right?

“Christ doth procure them for us...The Holy Spirit works them in us. The death of Christ is their meritorious cause; the Spirit of God and His effectual grace their efficient, working instrumentally with power by the word and ordinances.”

Error #1- The Arminians teach that Christ did not procure these graces for us

They write, *“There is nothing more vain, nothing more foolish than to attribute our regeneration and faith unto the death of Christ; for if Christ may be said to have merited for us faith and regeneration, then faith cannot be a condition whose performance God should require at the hands of sinners under the pain of eternal damnation.”*

“If faith be the effect of the merit of Christ, it cannot be our duty.”

The argue, *“that nothing which God requireth of us can be procured for us by Christ.”*

They believe that we must possess, of our own **power**, the thing which God desires from us.

They argue that God cannot be pleased with something we do if He had to get that thing for us. Therefore, **nothing** God requires of us could Christ have procured for us.

Owen quickly points out that we are **commanded** in Scripture to “be reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:20) which, if the Arminian thought was right would mean that we alone are able to reconcile ourselves to God. Also, why would we ever pray for God to work in our lives or in the lives of others.

They reject that the **beginning** of our salvation is of grace.

Error #2 The Arminians teach that these graces are ours and not a product of the Spirit's work within us

They write, *“It is most certain that that ought not to be commanded which is wrought in us; and that cannot be wrought in us which is commanded.”*

The Arminian argument is that if we are required to do something in Scripture, we must have the **capacity** to do it in ourselves. (Pelagius-Augustine quote, Erasmus-Luther quote, a common misunderstanding)

They argue, *“That it is a most absurd thing to affirm that God either effects by His power, or procureth by His wisdom, that the elect should do those things that He requireth of them.”*

They reject that the **working** out of our salvation is of grace.

Rebuttal

1. **Deuteronomy 10:16**-God **commands** the people, *“Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart...”*

Deuteronomy 30:6-Scripture declares, *“And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring...”*

“So that, it seems, the same thing, in diverse respects, may be God’s act in us and our duty towards Him.”

Law/Gospel-Gospel is God **fulfilling** the requirements of the Law for us in the person of Christ and then imputing that righteousness to us through faith

2. **Ezekiel 18:31**-God **commands** the people, *“...make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel?”*

Ezekiel 36:26-God declares, *“I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you.”*

3. Specifically, those graces that the Arminians argue must be ours alone (**faith** and **repentance**), we find the Scriptures saying, *“Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life”* (Acts 11:18). Scripture also declares that faith is *“a gift from God”* (Eph. 2:8).

4. The prophet Isaiah declares that *“You have indeed done for us all our works”* (26:12). The Apostle Paul declares that while he worked harder than any other it was actually God’s **grace** at work in him (1 Cor. 15:10). He says elsewhere that it is God who works in us according to His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13).

5. The Apostle Paul asks the question, *“What do you have that you did not **receive**?”* (1 Cor. 4:7)

“Everything that makes us differ from others is received from God.”

It is God who has raised us from spiritual death (Eph. 2:1-2). It is God who has made the blessings of the New Covenant to bear upon us (Jeremiah 32:40).

6. Look at church history and see how many people previously have already opposed this **same** error.