

A Display of Arminianism

John Owen

Chapter 11

Now we come to consider the question, “Is faith in Jesus the _____ way of salvation?”

“I shall shut up all this discourse concerning the meritorious cause of salvation, with their shutting out of Christ from being the only one and absolutely necessary means to bring us to heaven, to make us happy.”

Error 1: Old Testament Jews could be saved _____ a knowledge of or faith in Christ

“They grant salvation to the ancient patriarchs and Jews, before the coming of Christ, without any knowledge of or faith in Him at all; nay, they deny that any such faith in Christ was ever prescribed unto them or required of them.”

They write, *“It is certain that there is no place in the Old Testament from whence it may appear that faith in Christ as a Redeemer was ever enjoined or found in any of them.”*

Error 2: _____, before the coming of Christ, also could be saved without a knowledge of or faith in Christ

“What they teach of the Jews, that also they grant concerning the Gentiles living before the incarnation of Christ; they also might attain salvation, and be justified without His knowledge.”

They write, *“For although the covenant was not revealed unto them by the same means that it was unto the Jews, yet they are not to be supposed to be excluded from the covenant (of grace), not to be excluded from salvation; for some way or other they were called.”*

Error 3: They deny that faith in Christ _____ is the only way of salvation

In their writings they answer the question, *“Whether the only means of salvation be the life, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ?”* With “No”.

How can a person get to this point? Owen writes, *“First, they deny the contagion and demerit of original sin; then make the covenant of grace to be universal, and to comprehend all and every one of the posterity of Adam; thirdly, grant a power in ourselves to come unto God by any such means as He will appoint, and affirm that He doth assign some means unto all,--and it will naturally follow that the knowledge of Christ is not absolutely necessary to salvation, and so down falls the pre-eminence of Christianity; its heaven-reaching crown must be laid level with the services of dunghill gods.”*

Rebuttal-Owen does acknowledge that before the Pelagian controversy there were some Christian writers to fall into similar erroneous thinking about the Gentiles.

Opposing Error 1 (and 3)

First, from the very beginning Christ was laid forth as the only _____ of salvation-Genesis 3:15-which is an evangelical promise. The Old Testament is then filled with passages showing forth Christ's coming life, death, and work of redemption.

Second, Christ taught His disciples that the OT was _____ pointing the saints to faith in Him.

"Our Savior taught His disciples that all the prophets from Moses spake concerning Him, and that the sole reason why they did not so readily embrace the faith of His passion and resurrection was because they believed not the prophets (Luke 24:25-26); showing plainly that the prophets required faith in His death and passion."

Third, the faith of the hope-filled Jews shows a focus on Christ (such as Simeon) & even the _____ knew enough to know that the Scriptures were pointing to the Christ (John 4:25).

Fourth, Jesus teaches that _____ faith was directed towards Him (John 8:56).

Fifth, the Scriptures show the unity of the gospel throughout. Jesus is referred to as the slain Lamb. Jesus is said to be the same yesterday, today, and forevermore. The Apostles tell us there is only one name under heaven by which men are saved. Paul tells the Gentiles that they, before faith in Christ, were aliens of the covenant. Many saints of old also testify likewise to this truth such as Ignatius who wrote, *"All the saints were saved by Christ; hoping in Him, and waiting for Him, they obtained salvation by Him."* Eusebius said it was proper to call the OT saints "*_____*"- because their hope and faith were just as ours is today.

Opposing Error 2 (and 3)

If the Jews were saved _____ by faith in Christ, then obviously, the Gentiles, who were saved, were saved by faith in Christ alone.

Owen writes that the Arminians do *"...not consider the corruption and universal disability of nature to do anything that is good (John 15:5), nor yet the sinfulness of their best works and actions (Proverbs 15:8); the Word of God is plain that without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6); that no nation or person can be blessed but in the Seed of Abraham (Genesis 12:3)."*

Paul declared that the _____ of the gospel leads to salvation (Rom. 10:14).

Therefore, *"No salvation can be granted unto them on whom the Lord hath so far poured out His indignation as to deprive them of the knowledge of the sole means thereof, Christ Jesus. And to those that are otherwise minded, I give only this necessary caution,--Let them take heed, lest, whilst they endeavor to invent new ways to heaven for others, by so doing, they lose the true way themselves."*