

**EXAMINING CONTESTED REFORMED THEOLOGY BELIEFS**  
**Part III: Examining The Five Points Of Calvinism (And Arminianism) In Light Of Scripture**  
**D. Examining Calvinism's Doctrine Of Irresistible Grace In Light Of Scripture**

**I. Introduction**

- A. The theology of John Calvin, the main formulator of "Reformed Theology," rests on five "pillars" of belief: Total Inability, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace and Perseverance of the saints, doctrines that spell, **T-U-L-I-P**, Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, p. 1, 59f.
- B. These **beliefs** and their **spiritual effects** on believers besides the **opposing beliefs** of **Arminianism** and its respective **spiritual effects** are **critiqued** by **Christ** in **respective order** in Revelation 3:17 as follows:

**II. Examining Calvinism's Doctrine Of Irresistible Grace In Light Of Scripture, Revelation 3:17 et al.**

- A. Calvinism teaches "Irresistible Grace," that unsaved man's will is in such bondage to sin that he cannot author faith, so the Holy Spirit effectively enlightens and causes the elect to trust in Christ, *Ibid.*, p. 163.
- B. Conversely, Arminians hold God gives **every individual** "a special influence of the Holy Spirit" so he may trust in Christ, Strong, *Syst. Theol.*, p. 601; also Bettenson, ed., *Docs. of the Chr. Ch.*, 2nd ed., 378.
- C. Yet, **Jesus Christ** prophetically **criticized both** views and their errant **spiritual results** in Revelation 3:17:
  - 1. Jesus claimed the Laodiceans were **fourth** of all "**blind**" (NIV & KJV). The Greek word for "blind is **tuphlos** (*UBS Grk. N.T.*, p. 845), and we define what Christ means by it through the Scripture context:
    - a. In Rev. 3:18, Christ said the **solution** to this Rev. 3:17 "blind" state came by applying an eyesalve (really, a **poultice** made from mineralized tablets at Laodicea's famous medical school that were sliced from a kollyrium [cylinder], reduced to powder and smeared on the eyes [cf. Sir W. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches*, p. 429]) that came from **Himself** so the afflicted might "see."
    - b. Well, **elsewhere, only** in Jn. 9 did **Christ** use a **poultice** on **eyes** to give one **physical** sight to **lead to his spiritual insight** (*Ryrie St. Bib., KJV*, 1978 ed, 1887), so the Rev. 3 "blind" state **is spiritual**.
  - 2. This **counters both Calvinist and Arminian** views of the **role** of the **Holy Spirit** in **illuminating** men:
    - a. Though Calvinism teaches God's Holy Spirit illumines and effectually causes the elect to trust in Christ, as the Laodiceans are **true sons of God** (Rev. 3:19 in view of Heb. 12:6-8) and are yet "blind," there is no "irresistible" grace or they would **not also** be "blind" as God's **true sons!**
    - b. Then, as Arminianism teaches the Holy Spirit causes every man readily to be able to see his need for Christ so he can contribute faith to be saved, the fact that these **true sons of God** (Rev. 3:19 in light of Hebrews 12:6-8) were **also** "blind" reveals they were still saved though having **no** insight, so one's illumination to the truth is **God's work alone apart from** man's effort in **any way!**
    - c. Rather, the Holy Spirit illuminates and convicts men of the truth with no cooperating effort or merit on man's part, and that divine conviction leaves the sinner free to exercise his own faith to believe. God **ALONE** then saves man, and God **ALONE** provides **ILLUMINATION** even in the Christian life that **FOLLOWS** when the believer walks by the Holy Spirit's power.
  - 3. Spiritually, the errant views of the Holy Spirit's illuminating work in Calvinism and Arminianism have led to their disciples' lack of Bible insight: (a) the Calvinist's assumption he is forever given the Spirit's effective insight via "efficacious grace" at salvation has led to his assuming his spiritual insight will advance by way of God's predestination, and has tended to leave him irresponsibly not leaning upon the Spirit for that insight growth. (b) The Arminian's assumption he always is equipped by the Spirit to discern God's truth and that his faith produces salvation has likewise led him to a futile failure to depend upon the Holy Spirit for illumination of Scripture truths. Thus, both groups have failed to see the need for **believers** (a) **responsibly** (b) to **exercise** a dependence upon the **Holy Spirit's** ministry available in fellowship with God (John 16:13) to grow in Biblical, spiritual insight, Eph. 1:17 with 1 Cor. 2:9-16! Both groups of disciples have become "blind" to Biblical truth as a result, Mk. 4:21-25!

**Lesson:** (1) Calvinism errs in asserting the Holy Spirit irresistibly illuminates the elect so they will trust in Christ, and (2) Arminianism errs in holding that insight is always provided by the Holy Spirit so man can trust in Christ. (3) Rather, the Spirit (a) convicts ALL the lost so ALL are responsible to respond by faith in Christ (Jn. 1:9; 16:8; Rev. 22:17), BUT He (b) illumines only those Christians who live by the Spirit's power to grow and KEEP their Biblical insight, Gal. 5:16-23; 1 Cor. 2:9-16; Mk. 4:21-25!