

St. Augustine writes about this passage in particular. By it he was convinced that he must lay aside his former wrong opinion, when he had believed the following in his treatise *On Predestination*, chapter 3: “I erred in this matter. I believed that God’s grace consists only of this: God reveals His will in the preaching of the truth. But our faith in the preached Gospel is our own work and is within our own powers.” Likewise, St. Augustine writes further, “[I erred when] I said that it is within our own power to believe the Gospel and to will. But it is God’s work to give the power to do something to those who believe and will.”

This teaching is founded on God’s Word and conforms to the *Augsburg Confession* and other writings mentioned above, as the following testimonies prove.

In Article XX (29–32) the *Augsburg Confession* says as follows:

The Holy Spirit is received through faith, hearts are renewed and given new affections, and then they are able to bring forth good works.... Without the Holy Spirit people are full of ungodly desires. They are too weak to do works that are good in God’s sight [John 15:5]. Besides, they are in the power of the devil, who pushes human beings into various sins, ungodly opinions, and open crimes.

And a little afterward (XX 36):

Without faith and without Christ, human nature and ability are much too weak to do good works.

These passages clearly testify that the *Augsburg Confession* does not at all recognize the human will in spiritual things as free. But it says that a person is the devil’s captive. How, then, is a person able to turn himself to the Gospel or Christ by his own powers?

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Solid Declaration 11.27–30; Concordia: *The Lutheran Confessions: A Reader’s Edition of the Book of Concord* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2006).

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