

The Augsburg Confession of 1530


Article XVIII: Free Will

Will

- ❖¹ Our churches teach that a person's will has some freedom to choose civil righteousness and to do things subject to reason.

Article XVIII: Free Will

❖² It [a person's will] has no power, without the Holy Spirit, to work the righteousness of God, that is, spiritual righteousness. For “the natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:14).



* **Romans 3:10** As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹ there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. ¹² All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." {Psalms 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Eccles. 7:20}

* **Hebrews 11:6** "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

"The most damnable and pernicious heresy that has ever plagued the mind of man is that somehow he can make himself good enough to deserve to live forever with an all Holy God."

~ Martin Luther

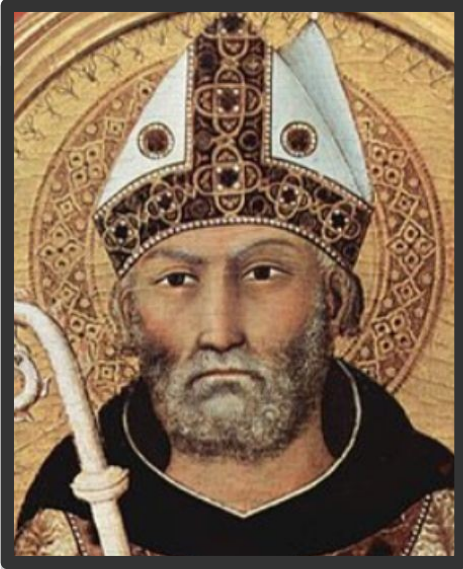
Article XVIII: Free Will

- ❖₃ This righteousness is worked in the heart when the Holy Spirit is received through the Word [Galatians 3:2–6].

Galatians 3:2-6

* ² I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? ³ Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? ⁴ Have you suffered so much for nothing-- if it really was for nothing? ⁵ Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard? ⁶ Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

Article XVIII: Free Will



❖⁴ This is what Augustine says in his *Hypognosticon*, Book III:

Augustine – Bishop of Hippo in North Africa (Algeria) From A.D. 395 to 430, one of the four great teachers of the western church. He spent much time writing against the teaching of Pelagius and his followers who said that man had a free will and therefore could do good by his own power if he wished.

Article XVIII: Free Will

❖ “We grant that all people have a free will. It is free as far as it has the judgment of reason. This does not mean that it is able, without God, either to begin, or at least to complete, anything that has to do with God. It is free only in works of this life, whether good or evil....

Article XVIII: Free Will

* 5 ... Good I call those works that spring from the good in nature, such as willing to labor in the field, to eat and drink, to have a friend, to clothe oneself, to build a house, to marry a wife, to raise cattle, to learn various useful arts, or whatsoever good applies to this life. 6 For all of these things depend on the providence of God. They are from Him and exist through Him. 7 Works that are willing to worship an idol, to commit murder, and so forth, I call evil.”

Article XVIII: Free Will

❖⁸ Our churches condemn the Pelagians and others who teach that without the Holy Spirit, by natural power alone, we are able to love God above all things and do God's commandments according to the letter.

Romans 8:5-8

⑤ “Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh....To set the mind on the flesh is death... For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

Article XVIII: Free Will

- ❖⁹ Although nature is able in a certain way to do the outward work (for it is able to keep the hands from theft and murder), yet it cannot produce the inward motions, such as the fear of God, trust in God, chastity, patience, and so on.

Romans 8:9-11

⑤ “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”