

SAMUEL HUBER ON ELECTION AND JUSTIFICATION: TRANSLATIONS FROM HIS
WRITINGS

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Translator's Introduction

These translations are presented in the hope that they may provide a broader context for the doctrinal controversy surrounding the Reformed-turned-Lutheran theologian, Samuel Huber (1547-1624), and his teachings on universal election and universal justification while at the University of Wittenberg, beginning in 1592. My primary goal in approaching this topic was to translate a whole work by Huber on election and justification that would allow him to provide a complete presentation of his thoughts, and having accomplished that to translate any further illuminating excerpts I could find relating to universal justification. His *Compendium of Theses on Universal Redemption* (*Compendium Thesium De Universali Redemptione*) and *Steadfast Confession* (*Bestaendige Bekandtnuss*) met the former goal, while the excerpts from his *Brief Confutation* (*Brevis Confutatio*) and *Invincible Truth* (*Invicta Veritas*) met the latter.

The *Compendium* actually predates the controversy with the Wittenberg theologians, but it provides important insight into his enmity toward the Calvinist teachings of limited atonement and predestination, which clearly influenced his own views. It is a considerably condensed version of his *Theses that Christ Died for the Sins of All People*.¹ When one reads this work before the others it is not hard to see why Huber could make such an easy leap from universal redemption on the one hand to universal election on the other.

The *Steadfast Confession* is enlightening in its own right in that even though Huber is clearly on the defensive, he does not write as polemically as in the other works, even when defending himself against false accusations at the end. Huber seems to be primarily concerned with presenting his view of universal election in a brief yet complete fashion. In this work it becomes clear that Huber views election as God's earnest desire that all people would be saved and as the call to all people to come to faith in Christ. This is how he is able to say that God "elected" all people, even though this is not how Scripture uses that word. However, as the Huber himself emphasizes, it cannot be maintained, as some casually do, that Huber taught a form of universalism.

The excerpts from the last two writings were selected because of their specific reference to Huber's views on universal justification. In the *Brief Confutation* Huber is responding to *A Clear Explanation of the Controversy among the Wittenberg Theologians*, by Aegidius Hunnius, Polycarp Leyser, and Solomon Gesner. Here Huber shows he understands justification to mean

¹ The *Compendium* contains 47 theses. The larger work has 1185. See the bibliography.

the non-imputation of sins, and if on the basis of passages like 2 Corinthians 5:19 God did not count the sins of the world against them, then he has justified the whole world.

With the *Invincible Truth* Huber has Stephan Gerlach, his former colleague at the University of Tuebingen, in his sights, though he does not refrain from attacking the Wittenberg theologians as well. The chosen excerpts from chapter 11 (the fifth of six “caves” in which Gerlach hides himself) focus on revealing the contradictory ways in which Gerlach, Hunnius, and his colleagues speak about atonement, redemption, and justification. Admittedly, Huber does this by ripping his opponents’ quotations from their context and placing them one after another to his liking, but it at least reveals what Huber saw as significant in the controversy and how he himself understood the larger issues.

For the translation originals, as well as a few other pertinent works by Huber that might be worthwhile to investigate, I have provided direct web-links in the bibliography. Though they come from the digitized libraries of various German universities, I found all of the documents through the Post-Reformation Digital Library website (prdl.org). If for some reason these links fail, they should still be accessible there.

Andrew Hussman

Compendium of Theses by Samuel Huber
On the Universal Redemption of the Human Race,
Accomplished by Jesus Christ
Against the Calvinists

Tuebingen

Published by George Gruppenbach

1590

To the Pious and Learned Youth at the Cherished Academy of Tuebingen

Greetings

Most learned youths, the theses on the universal redemption of Christ, about which there will be discussion, by God's grace, with the reverend and most distinguished sir, Stephan Gerlach, doctor and professor of sacred theology presiding, grew so large that I fear such a great amount of money is scarcely available for anyone so that they, once they have bought these for themselves, may be able to prepare and equip themselves for disputation. And surely my wealth is not so overflowing that I can, in keeping with the usual and praiseworthy custom of this academy, buy and give generously to individuals from my own money. Therefore it seemed good to gather into one volume, as far as this could be done, those things which were treated more extensively, so that, if the work will appear useful, I might provide for both you and myself by diminishing the expenses. Consequently, those who could not acquire for themselves the booklet of my theses can use this compendium. There will be responses to the arguments brought against these Theses, just as if they were being brought against the Theses in my little work. Moreover, we aim to follow the larger work in arrangement, so that whoever can buy the booklet may prepare themselves for the Theses located in the larger one and propose whatever objections they can; and so that those extensive proofs of our thought and refutations of the opposing side's arguments may be examined; and so that we may experience how firmly the truth of God's Word is asserted and how firmly the impious teaching of adversaries is refuted.

Samuel Huber

Thesis 1. Christ Jesus, the one and only Son of God, suffered and died for the entire human race, with the exception of no one among all people.

2. The Calvinists deny this both secretly and openly, and they try to completely overthrow the Christian religion with that manifest and apostate wickedness.

3. They do this secretly when they incessantly force their divine battle (*θεομαχίαν*) that they have devised concerning predestination, which in itself contemplates how, by oppressing the name of Christ, the head of the Christian religion may be extinguished.

4. But some, held back because of their horrific crime and convicted of this apostate error, see that they have chiefly become notorious in that sin. They wrap their wickedness under the cover of another concealment and say, “Christ died sufficiently for all, but not efficiently.”

5. The word (“sufficiently”), taken in the meaning in which pious antiquity took it, we do not reject, but rather we approve it. But the Calvinists, by fabricating a sinister and equivocal meaning for the word, consequently produce deceit for the more simple-minded.

6. For they wish to say this: “Christ’s death was powerful to this extent, that if he wanted to come to the aid of all people by it, he could very easily do this.”

7. But, so that the poison may appear healed, they simply deny that Christ wanted to take the sins of the entire human race upon himself, since many, indeed, the majority of people were created by God to this end, that they may perish. For this reason, they say that no grace had actually been decreed upon them by God from eternity, so that even though Christ’s death would suffice for all, nevertheless God had never intended his death for very many.

8. These ones now surpass those who flee the light of day: **a)** Theodore Beza,² **b)** D. Johann Jacob Grynaeus,³ **c)** David Pareus,⁴ **d)** Daniel Tossanus.⁵ They thunder with a clear and loud voice to the whole Christian world this apostasy of theirs, which is revealed by Christ and the Gospel.

² Theses of Moempelgard, Response 1 and Response 2. A native of France, Beza (1519-1605) lived most his life in Geneva and is considered Calvin’s successor. He also prepared an edition of the Greek New Testament.

³ Theses on the True and Orthodox teaching. Though he was the son of a Lutheran pastor, Grynaeus (1514-1617) rejected the Formula of Concord and its teaching on the Lord’s Supper. He spent most of his time in Basel.

⁴ Defense of Their Bible. A German Reformed pastor and theologian (1548-1622) from Frankenstein in Schlesien (modern Poland), Pareus was a professor at Heidelberg for the last few decades of his life and published an edition of Luther’s Bible along with polemical material.

⁵ Disputation on Whether Christ Died for All. A French theologian (1541-1602) who initially leaned toward Lutheranism but later joined the Reformed and became a professor at the University of Heidelberg in 1584.

9. They assert that it is false, counterfeit, reviling, impious, wicked and intolerable to teach that Christ wanted to die or did die for the whole world, but they assert he died only for some who were included in the secret and inexpressible counsel of God.

10. We strongly declare to the contrary that the true, firm, unshakable, and unchanging teaching of the Gospel is that Christ not only could have had mercy on all by his death if he had wanted to, but that this is true for all, and by this very work he had mercy. He handed himself over no less for any one unbeliever than for any one believer as a sacrifice for sin, undoubtedly, so that he might liberate all, as many people as there are, from death, the Devil, and hell.

11. This work, I say, he has made available for all, and he wishes from his heart that everyone would claim such a great blessing conveyed to them through faith. Those who believe the Gospel and persevere in faith are saved. However, those who do not believe the Gospel, even though they at one time believed, but afterwards (as happens to some) were lacking in faith—they fall from the grace they had received and are condemned.

12. Hence it happens that some are saved but others are condemned.

13. But even though some do not believe, yet it should not be said that because of their unbelief Christ did not do what it proclaims he did in his universal Gospel. Even the unbelief of people does not remove or abolish the truth of the fact.

14. Moreover, there are three classes of arguments that he died for the entire human race. Everyone who will try to overturn these does so in vain, unless those who attempt this accuse and convict Scripture of falsehood first.

15. The first class of these arguments is in those places where the universality that is extended over all and every person is clearly contained.

16. As when we read: **a)** all nations will be blessed in Christ (Gen 22); **b)** Christ took away the sins of all (Is 53, Jn 1); **c)** propitiation was made for all (1 Jn 2); **d)** he gave himself for all (1 Tim 2); **e)** he died for all (2 Cor 5; Heb 2); **f)** he came to save the world (Jn 3 and 12); **g)** all flesh was given to him by the Father, so that he might give life to each one (Jn 17); **h)** as many as died through Adam are made alive through Christ (Rom 5; 1 Cor 15).

17. From this generality no people are excluded, for all and every person, just as types⁶ and individuals, are included in this kind.

⁶ Here and in thesis 22 I have translated *species* with “type” and *genus* with “kind” in the attempt to consistently demonstrate Huber’s point of a larger category with *genus* and a subset of that with *species*.

18. And this general nature of redemption, which includes the entire human race, is located everywhere in Holy Scripture,

19. And believed in the universal church of Christ at all times,

20. In the same way it is firm and certain, together with that, when we read and believe: **a)** all died in Adam (Rom 5); **b)** all people are liars (Rom 3); **c)** all have turned away (Rom 3); **d)** all are under sin (Rom 3); **e)** all are included under unbelief (Rom 11); **f)** from one blood came the entire human race (Ac 17).

21. Just as those previous declarations cannot be taken particularly, so neither can these, since they are mutually opposed in the same respect.

22. The second class of arguments is where in Holy Scripture not only the kind, but also the type, indeed individuals are named, both of those who believe and are saved, and of those who do not believe and are not saved. For all of these Christ came as Savior. About believers there is no question.

23. About unbelievers the clear and evident passages are of this sort, when Scripture says: **a)** they were grafted into Christ (Jn 15; Rom 11); **b)** their debts were remitted to them (Mt 18); **c)** Christ died for them (Rom 14; 1 Cor 8); **d)** and they were bought by Christ for a price (2 Pt 2); **e)** they forgot the cleansing from former sins (2 Pt 1); **f)** they fell out of grace (Gal 3; Heb 2; 2 Cor 6; Rom 11); **g)** they are engaged in sins again (2 Pt 2); **h)** they return to vomit (2 Pt 2); **i)** they crucify Christ to themselves anew (Heb 6); **k)** they have been sanctified by the blood of Christ (Heb 10); **l)** Judas had been given by the Father to the Son (Jn 17).

24. Regarding unbelievers and those perishing, these enumerated passages exclaim and teach that they have also been redeemed by Christ.

25. Those who deride this truth of Scripture even a little will present nothing at all from Scripture and cannot defend its truth, neither for themselves nor against others.

26. From here the third class of arguments emerges, which points out those astounding, absurd things which must necessarily follow from Calvinistic teaching.

27. I. The entire Christian religion and faith is called into doubt.

28. II. Scripture's appearance is taken in such a way that it more truly resembles the most deceitful Quran than the eternal truth of God.

29. III. The catholic and true church is damned, which has believed and always confessed with one mouth that Christ died for all people.

30. IV. People are driven to desperation, since no one among all people can be sure of anything regarding his own salvation.

31. V. They lay a foundation for deceiving and misleading souls with pure cunning invented by the Devil, which is the consequence built out of pure particulars. For example, Christ died only for some. Therefore he died even for me.⁷

32. VI. But by that consequence people are deluded, repelled from the word, and driven into desperation, which is very easy to determine.

33. VII. The universal Gospel is abolished, since certainly no one can know both what and to whom it should be preached.

34. VIII. The sacraments are removed, since no sure grace and salvation are promised to the baptized, and Christ's body and blood can be presented to no one for certain and can be received by no one for certain.

35. IX. God is accused of fraud, because he says one thing and thinks another.

36. X. He is accused of a detestable lie, since he declares by his word those things which he himself comes to opposed by his own strict judgment.

37. XI. Christ is accused, because by his false suffering and false gospel he deluded first God, from whom he received a different command that was also holy, eternal and inviolable, that he should die without a doubt only for a few only—a different command than he in fact offered when he professed that he did not die only for a few, but for the whole world, certainly for the entire human race—which would be contrary to the counsel, good pleasure, and decree of his Father. Second, he deluded mankind, since he kept the people's mouths in suspense with such great hope, as if he would die for all, when yet, as the Calvinists profess, nothing more insane and more deceitful could be said or thought. Wherefore, if this is how it really is, Christ should be judged because he deluded both God and people by his empty suffering, indeed he ridiculed both God and people with invalid suffering.

38. XII. This also follows: that the boundless and holy God of hosts is rightly accused of cruelty, caprice, malice (*ἐπιχειρεκακίας*), unrighteousness and, in short, the worst evil deeds (especially if the Calvinists impose on this doctrine of theirs the culmination of their teaching on predestination, which they fabricated not long ago).

⁷ While this does not at first sound like a horrible thought, perhaps Huber intends it as an indication of man's inclination to look to oneself for certainty of salvation rather than to depend on the objective, universal work of Christ's redemption.

39. XIII. Thus the result is that it would be preferable to be engulfed up by the raging waters of the Manicheans than by the Calvinists', since the latter assign to God, whom they call good, the origin and propagation of evil, but the former only assigned good to good and evil to evil.

40. XIII. It would even be preferable to follow any religion at all, rather than that of the Calvinists.

41. XV. No age and no cesspool of apostates has ever thought up a more horrible doctrine, which crushes and suffocates consciences more rapidly and miserably and cuts off every taste of divine grace, than this Calvinistic plague.

42. And so, whether you look at the Church, which was often warned about the frauds and imposters of this sect and seemed to not assess carefully enough its danger; or whether you look at those seducers who are worthy of God's judgment, since they began to drive Christ out from his own supper with loud shouts, to banish him to empyrean heaven, and to condemn our prayers to him united with the word. They are filled with that reprobate spirit, with whose strength and working they begin to uproot the whole Gospel of Jesus Christ.

43. We will say no more about those who are seduced by their tricks; with them we hope that once the worthlessness of their pastors is made known, they may be turned to repentance.

44. But that insane and furious malice of people and the cunning against the exalted name of God is a prelude to the overthrow of the western Church, which will undoubtedly emerge unless this evil is met.

45. And this is much more evident than Islam once was in the east, since at that unfortunate name any Christian heart could tremble and recognize Satan's mockery. But now those seducers who import the same evil smear it everywhere with extraordinary deceit.

46. They are intent on this plan, that they may scatter Christ completely, first from hearts, then from Scripture, finally from the church.

47. Therefore, let us meet this Calvinism with the power and grace of God, and let us also expose its deceits everywhere and confound it through the word of God. Let God arrive with the sanctification of his name. Amen.

Dr. Samuel Huber's Steadfast Confession

Whether God in his counsel and will, through his dear Son Jesus Christ, has completely redeemed from death, and thus also has completely elected and ordained to life, salvation and blessedness only a few people, or especially all people without the exception of any person.

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1595

To the Christian Reader

With this brief confession of mine the Christian reader will at once regard as good and think about this Lutheran teaching in the fear of God. If you want to have something more extensive and detailed, then there may well be time for that. But with this I ask pious Christian hearts that they would defend and support me against all kinds of slander according to this correct confession of mine, and if God is willing, then I have gained much for Christ's church.

Samuel Huber, Dr., in his own hand.

Summary of Huber's Teaching on Election⁸

I, Dr. Samuel Huber, have always believed, taught and confessed, and I still always believe, teach and confess steadfastly that God sent his Son as a Savior for the entire human race. By his bitter suffering and death he also redeemed all people from sin and death so that they all might live and all might be saved. Therefore, I confess that he secretly abandoned and passed over no one in his counsel, just as he also gave all people to his Son and through him sought and desired the salvation and blessedness of all people. Therefore, by this I confess also, just as Paul says in Ephesians 1, "God chose us before the beginning of the world through Christ, that we should be holy and blameless," that for such a purpose he chose and elected through this his Son not only some, not only a few, not only a select part. But just as Christ is a universal Savior and came into the world to save sinners and came to give life to the world, that we might live holy, blessed, and eternal lives, so also God elected and ordained through his Son all sinners, that is, all people to life, salvation and blessedness.

This I confess about God and his perfect work of grace which he displayed through his dear Son and accomplished for the entire human race.

Two Groups Separated by Belief and Unbelief

At the same time I believe and confess as I have always believed, taught and confessed, that when this universal work of God's grace over all people comes to the people, it is taught, proclaimed and preached (as Christ himself commanded it to be preached in all the world), that there people are split into two groups by belief and unbelief. The one group follows and pursues that to which they were elected and called by God, and in this way they receive through faith that

⁸ I have supplied the headings in this work.

to which they were elected in Christ, namely, they receive eternal life, become holy, saved, children and heirs of God in Christ, through whom, as Paul says, God has ordained us to sonship.

The second group, and (unfortunately) the largest group, does not want to hear the Gospel, or once they do hear it, they then despise it and persecute it at once. Therefore, by their own malice and their own fault, they do not want to follow and pursue that to which they, no less than the other group, were foreseen, ordained and elected by God through his dear Son. Therefore this group, under which stand all unrepentant sinners, whether they are Jews, Turks, Germans, Welsh, French, and whether they are called Christians or are not called Christians, as long as they do not receive what was acquired and ordained for them through Christ—they will all as a group together with each other be lost and condemned, and as they die in unbelief, so they will also be eternally lost and condemned. This eternal judgment of damnation befalls them because of unbelief, that is, that they have not obeyed and have not followed their dear God, who redeemed them from death through Christ and ordained them to life. The fault for their condemnation, then, is from themselves and in no preceding, secret counsel of God, as when some want to think that God, by an eternal decree, excluded and separated them both from Christ and from life in Christ and made a secret choice of those whom alone he selected and elected to life through Christ, and thus he quite sorrowfully and eternally passed over, abandoned, and expelled the rest. Holy Scripture knows nothing of such a secret choice, but it shows Christ sent and given by God, yes, from God's embrace, a Savior for the entire human race, and in God's counsel, in God's decree, will, and plan there was no person passed over. So the entire gospel reads and teaches throughout.

Even the godless cannot be condemned because of their unbelief, if God from eternity had separated, set apart, and excluded them by his counsel from Christ and life in Christ. If in this way they were abandoned, passed over, and expelled in God's preceding eternal counsel, then they also at every point of their life, from their mother's womb on, would have had to believe in nothing at all, and therefore they would have been unable to be condemned because of unbelief, but God in his secret counsel would have to have the blame and cause of their condemnation on himself, and he would have had to decree the poor people to death and eternal agony.

From this confession you understand these two parts in particular, first: God in his counsel and antecedent will⁹ elected and ordained to life not only a few people, but at the same time all people through the universal Savior of the entire human race, since God has made no truncated election,¹⁰ no particularity, no separation and no consideration of the person, but everything was equally good, that is, everything was enclosed under sin, so that he has had mercy on all, Romans 11. And in that we now place the cause of eternal election and the work of God's grace over all people, and we cannot find from the holy Gospel that God then selected only a few people to life in Christ. But there in the Gospel everything is universal, also according to our creation, since we all are together created in God's image, that is, for peace, joy, salvation, life, and blessedness. We all, after the fall of Adam, were together also elected to life through the first promise again in Christ, the highly praised seed. So also Christ altogether redeemed us, altogether overcame sin, death, the Devil and hell, and came to the world, that is, to give life to the entire human race, John 6; to save the world, John 3, 1 John 4; he died for all people, 2 Corinthians 5. And indeed he came because in God's counsel they were ordained to life completely through him. For what else would he want to die except for them? Reconciliation was for the sin of the entire world, 1 John 2. The one whom he reconciled with God is certainly also ordained to life through him and never was passed over in God's secret counsel. This Son of God is the one to whom the Father points us through the open heavens, to listen to him and to learn in him all his counsel and his good pleasure toward us. He calls us all to himself and shows he came from the Father to bring us life in full. As he says in John 17, the Father has given him power over all flesh, so that he might give eternal life to that which had been given to him. That then is what St. Paul speaks of: "God elected us through Christ from the beginning of the world, that we should be holy and blameless," and shortly afterwards, "God has ordained us to sonship for himself through him, according to the good pleasure of his will." And he also lays the foundation of this good pleasure on this: because he has loved us in the beloved, that is, in Christ, in whom he loved the whole world (John 3).

The Need to Receive Christ through Faith

⁹ *voluntate antecedente*.

¹⁰ German, *Stuempfelwahl*. According to Huber's orthography this would come out to *Stummelwahl*, "stump election." The picture of a remnant being left behind is evident.

The second part in this confession of mine is that no one reaches and obtains the salvation, that is, the purpose for which he was elected, unless he afterwards receives with faith Christ in whom he was elected (for outside of Christ there is no election, no work of grace, no salvation and no life), unless he finds consolation and delights in what God through his Son directed to him, and remains like this with him. If he does that, then he comes under no condemnation, but goes through death into life and is, as Christ says, saved and has eternal life, John 3:5-6. But the one who through unbelief renounces and lets go of that to which he was elected and does not receive Christ, by this he loses all the gracious goodwill of God, and by his unbelief loses not only Christ, but also life in Christ, and is thus always and eternally condemned and lost. For outside of Christ, whom the unbelieving person denies and despises, there is no salvation, no light, no peace, no favor, no gracious will, no work of grace, no life and no blessedness. For no one comes to the Father except through the Son alone, and the one who does not have the Son also does not have the Father, and because he despises the saving light of life, he should then also rightly be tossed into the outermost darkness, where eternally there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. He should also not be reckoned and counted with the number, title and name of the believers, the elect, the dear children of God, and that is through his own fault, because he despises and rejects what God has given to him and what he has made vain and weak in himself through unbelief, and yet it nevertheless remains for him that God has had mercy on him for the sake of his Son, has ordained and elected him also to life, and in his Son has also loved him. But because the godless person does not believe this and does not receive it and repels and erases himself from mercy, from election, from love itself, so that this work of God cannot have power and action in him, so remains for him what God has sent to him through his dear Son as judgment, as conviction of unbelief, and as rigid, undeniable proof that he through his own fault and own mischief, as an unbeliever who did not want to follow and obey God and receive his grace, is condemned and lost.

The Accusation against Huber Refuted

This is a pure, clear, sufficient confession of how I have always taught and believed universal election with all the foundation of God's Word, together with the unanimous consensus of the pure, Lutheran church. With this the false addition and slander is also clearly, distinctly, and sufficiently opposed, as if I hold a teaching and confession that all people, whether they

believe or do not believe, that is, whether they follow their election and appointment to life through Christ or not—that nevertheless they still come altogether into heaven and are saved. Such an atrocious, gross, terrible teaching never, by God's grace, came to me in my thoughts, my words and teaching all my life long. And whoever holds such a teaching, that all people can or may come into heaven whether they believe in Christ or do not believe—he is the Devil's apostle. Such dreadful slander was devised and invented against me by no one other than the loathsome devil, and I ask all Christian hearts for God's sake, that they would regard me hereafter as justified and give no credence to this false addition.

And although only they then are saved who receive Christ, the leader of their life, with faith and follow in him and through him that to which they were elected and ordained, yet all Christians on the contrary would guard themselves against the Calvinistic leaven, would established and make no particularization and no separation in God's counsel, in God's will and plan—for the reason that it would be contrary to God's revealed will and would call into question for us every foundation of faith, and with that the entire Gospel and the holy Sacrament, as also all the promises of God. But what God has done for us and planned for us for our salvation, and what he through Christ his dear Son has directed and revealed to the lost human race, that is left and remains universal, without separation, without exception, without any particularization, for that is in harmony with the entire Gospel throughout. But when you speak of people, and no longer of what God has done, then there is talk about what people do, with the result that these same ones introduce particularity or separation, since not all do, believe and think about what they should do. There particularity has its basis—only in the disobedience of unbelieving people. So much, then, briefly and simply from my confession on the doctrine of election and for the rescue of my innocence against the mysterious addition. May God give peace and unity to his church through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Brief Confutation of a Book Published under a Pseudonym, On the Controversy among the Wittenberg Theologians and Samuel Huber Concerning Election

On False Accusations¹¹

No new and decaying doctrine could ever be introduced without severe criticism from the truth and those who assert it.

Those theologians charge that I have set forth a universal justification, and indeed of such a kind that makes every person righteous by the very act of salvation and by participation, and simply carries them away into heaven. To this point they have directed every weapon of accusation thus far. But I have never dreamed or written anything of this sort. This, however, I had written against the Calvinists: since justification is universal according to Paul's teaching (Rom. 5), redemption is not able to not be universal. But I called universal justification that by which God, considering the satisfaction of Christ, became favorably disposed toward the entire human race because of that satisfaction, and thus he accepted it just as if everyone had made satisfaction for himself, with the law having been entirely fulfilled. In this respect it is sensibly called universal justification, not first by me, but by Paul. In it only that act of Christ's merit and satisfaction is considered at the tribunal of God. However, people still do not possess justification by their own act unless they apprehend by faith that which was approved and ratified by God on behalf of all. And so that it may be evident that I am thinking nothing foreign to Scripture, to Dr. Luther himself, and to the Saxon visitation,¹² I will enumerate their testimonies respectively.

From Scripture we have Rom. 5, "And so, just as through the fault of one it resulted in condemnation for all, so also through the justification of one it resulted in justification of life for all people;" 2 Cor. 5 "When God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting

¹¹ Pgs 50-52.

¹² Though the citation below could not be located, this appears to be a reference to the Saxon Visitation Articles of 1592, compiled by Aegidius Hunnius and others. These articles defended of the Formula of Concord against Calvinism and served as the standard for evaluating teachers and preachers in Saxony. They held an almost confessional status there for a number of years.

their sins toward them.” To “be reconciled” is certainly to remove the anger toward the human race. To “be reconciled with the world,” is to remove the anger toward all people, which those theologians, together with Kimedoncius,¹³ bitterly deny, not without blasphemy. And “not to impute sins” is to justify or to recognize as just, with the manner of speaking being taken up from the market place. Therefore, that justification comes upon all people no less than condemnation; that the world is reconciled; that by the very judgment of God, which God carried out in his own Son, sins are not imputed to us, but are imputed to Christ; and that satisfaction has been offered by him and has been accepted by the Father—that is to set forth universal justification in its own legitimate respect, concerning which there was previous discussion.

From Dr. Luther we have these words from the Preface to the New Testament, Thus this gospel of God or New Testament is a good story and report, sounded forth into all the world by the apostles, telling of a true David who strove with sin, death, and the devil, and overcame them, and thereby rescued all¹⁴ those who were captive in sin, afflicted with death, and overpowered by the devil. Without any merit of their own he made them righteous, gave them life, and saved them, so that they were given peace and brought back to God.¹⁵ For this they sing, and thank and praise God, and are glad forever if only they believe firmly¹⁶ and remain steadfast in faith.¹⁷

From the book of Saxon Visitation, fol. 316, we have:

Concerning this question our rightly believing Christian church [gives] this answer: That Christ is the reconciliation for the sin of the whole world and died for all people, then also he has actually reconciled by his death. The Father has truly received such reconciliation for the sake of each¹⁸ and every person and only looks at it in this: whether or not the people subsequently receive¹⁹ such reconciliation with God accomplished through Christ’s sacrifice. Then those who receive it with faith, *in them it remains effective*, but those who through unbelief stumble, in them it will again²⁰ be weak and nothing.

I consider these things to be clear enough, that with respect to the divine act and the efficacy of Christ’s merit I have set forth universal reconciliation, in which God wants to acquiesce, as for the most sufficient and fullest price for the sins of the entire world. Moreover,

¹³ A Reformed theologian (ca. 1550-1596) from Kempen in western Germany, near Cologne. He taught at the University of Heidelberg.

¹⁴ Not only a few. (Footnotes 14-16, 18-20 belong to Huber).

¹⁵ Into the fold of his grace.

¹⁶ The application brings joy.

¹⁷ E. Theodore Bachmann, ed. *Luther’s Works*, vol. 35 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), 358.

¹⁸ Here that universal justification at the tribunal of God, with respect to Christ.

¹⁹ Here the act applies justification and makes a person righteous.

²⁰ That pacification or reconciliation or absolution before the tribunal of God, through unbelief in a person is destroyed with respect to the effect.

he accepts this ransom (λύτρον) for all and every person and does not impute sins to them, nevertheless he does not yet lead a person by this participation into a state of salvation and eternal happiness, unless he will apply this benefit to himself by faith through word and sacraments, and so in this way participate. They who do not do this dishonor Christ, trample the blood of the testament, and bind themselves by this unbelief to the absolving of all their sins. This teaching of the Gospel the theologians call monstrous. I easily see what they are giving birth to here, but I do not want act as midwife for them in a rather prolonged struggle until they themselves burst. My spirit predicts nothing good among those men on account of this article in which the glory of Christ and the certainty of salvation by applying through faith is asserted.

The Invincible Truth concerning the Election and Predestination of the Human Race to Eternal Life, Accomplished by Christ Jesus

I.

On the Universal Atonement, Remission, and Abolishment of All Sins²¹

They say and affirm:

Gerlach in Disputation On the Passion of Christ, in the year 1594, thesis 51: “Just as he suffered for the sins of the whole world, so *he atoned for* not only some sins of all people, leaving behind the rest to be atoned for by people themselves through various works of traditions—but *all the sins of all people he abolished with his blood*, Tit 2:14. Christ gave himself for us all, 1 Tim 2, *That he might redeem us all* from all iniquity, and ‘the blood of Christ *purifies us from all sin,*’ not from only some, 1 John 1:7.”

The same in Theses Opposed to Huberianism, thesis 186: “And if sins are equally remitted if to all people through Christ’s death, *and besides this universal remission* there is no particular remission from God, then all people will be equally blessed and saved.”

And together with his colleagues in par.2, fol.116: “Christ *atoned for the sins of the whole world.*”

And in the same place, 125: “But even though Christ satisfied the law for the impious and unbelieving and *removed the written code by reason of his merit*, yet because they remain in unbelief, the Christ’s merit is of no benefit to them, nor is the written code removed from them for their benefit.” And in the same place, fol.122 “We demonstrated from the Scriptures above *that there are the twofold remission of sins and distinct acts.*”

Hunnus On Providence and Predestination, fol.226: “Christ is said to be the Savior of the world, in so far as *he atoned the sins of all people*, and he wants and commands this saving reconciliation to be announced to all people, and not only to be announced, but to be accepted by them.”

²¹ Pgs 70-73, 78-8. All italicized words in this work are Huber’s emphasis.

The same, in *The Theses Opposed to Huberianism*, thesis 152: “*He freed all people from sin, death and condemnation.*”

And with Hunnius, the theological faculty *On Confession*, fol.2: “Christ died so that, *effectively and by his very work* he might make full satisfaction for all people equally.”

And in that place, fol. 29 and 30. “Christ made satisfaction for *the sins of all*, even of the condemned, *effectively and by his very work* and also redeemed them from eternal death.”

From these some things should be gathered in summary: 1. Universally the entire human race is comprehended here, and nominally even all the condemned. 2. The sins of all people are comprehended here. 3. Christ, who atoned for all the sins of all people, is being pointed out. He made satisfaction for all, he cleansed all, he freed all, he redeemed all. He removed by his merit the written code of all. He abolished the sins of all, and *they assert that the universal remission of sins was accomplished*. 4. All these are done not metaphorically, but properly and truly, not by our faith, but efficaciously, and by the very work by Christ, to the extent he redeemed all people *from eternal condemnation*, even those, who yet remain unbelievers and endure the eternal penalty of condemnation. This is the truth and the light of the Gospel, showing to us the work of redemption accomplished for all, so that we all can apply to ourselves by faith this benefit of redemption and the abolishment and remission of our sins. And so this is the foundation and the description, as of universal remission, so also of universal justification. If the theologians persisted here we would have halcyon days in the Church, and Gerlach would burn his disputation with fire. If they would truly declare election accomplished in Christ for the salvation of all, or would have stated without apostasy that it is universal, they never would fall and never would have fallen from this rock of heavenly truth, and never would pollute themselves with the disgrace of the highest vanity, and never would have polluted themselves. Therefore here we understand what they affirm.

They again deny:

Gerlach, in *Theses Opposed to Huberianism*, theses 178 and 180, denies there is universal forgiveness. But you see at the same time how he is carried through waves of denials back and forth. Compare among yourselves theses 178 and 186.

The same in thesis 219: “And though the express mention of faith is not made everywhere, yet everywhere it is understood. Because the grace of God, the obedience, death and blood of Christ do not justify without faith, do not cleanse men from sins.”

The same in 258. “So also the words in 1 John 1. ‘The blood of Jesus Christ his Son purifies us from all sin.’ This is to be taken concerning the faithful.”

The same with his colleagues par.2 fol.122: “What pertains to the passage 2 Cor 5, those words, “Not imputing sins to them,” *are not to be taken universally* about all people without respect to faith, that is, faith foreseen, or faith which has embraced Christ.”

In the same in fol. 46: “Therefore your proposition is dangerous and intolerable, that to all people, believing and not believing, Turks and Christians, *through Christ’s death sins* equally are remitted.”

Hunnus in Explanation of the Controversy, fol.A.3.a: “They are Huber’s dreams that sins were absolved *to all equally through the general remission* of sins.”

The same in Theses Opposed to Huberianism, theses 1 and 4: “Huber professes that sins were remitted to all people equally, even to the Turks, etc, *this foul and filthy error*, etc.”

There in thesis 7: “How beautifully were sins remitted to him, since *where sins are truly remitted, there all anger and condemnation are removed?*”

Polycarp in Response to Examination, fol.61: “Huber fell into this madness, with others also being led into this error at the same time, thinking that God on account of Christ’s merit once *remitted sins.*”

These are the arguments that they will deny what they previously asserted firmly: 1. They say that there is no universal remission of sins. 2. That God imputed the sins of all people to his Son never happened. 3. *Sins are not forgiven and absolved to all by the merit and satisfaction of Christ.* 4. By the blood of Jesus Christ not all people are cleansed from sins. 5. The passage 1 John 1 pertains only to the faithful. 6. Foul and filthy is the error that sins are forgiven to all by Christ’s merit. 7. All are not redeemed *from condemnation.* These they hand down with respect to Christ’s work and merit, and everything contrary to what was above. This is the workshop in which they labor at their impiety in denying universal redemption. For redemption from sin was not accomplished if the remission and abolishment of our sins by Christ’s blood was never accomplished and if the sins of the whole world were never imputed to Christ. Here their object of faith is annulled, since that which did not happen cannot and should not be believed, and

Christ's work of redeeming us and reconciling us to God cannot happen, if man does not first believe. Here for such a time they will waver, until that final Antichrist will have worked the denial of the entire Gospel. But it is enough now that they deny that the sins of all people were imputed to Christ. If they were not imputed, he never even bore the sins of the world, nor received upon himself those which needed to be atoned. ...

III.

On Redemption

These always run together into one, but they are put forth separately so that the contradictory words may be all the more clear, as well as so many battalions and so many arrows of insults against the name of Jesus.

They say and affirm:

Gerlach in the Theses Opposed to Huberianism, thesis 328: "Not by any account, as Huber thinks, does the work of Christ's redemption weaken this doctrine. For according to God's mercy and grace *he freed us from anger, punishment and death* which God himself had threatened according to his own righteousness, and which he inflicts on the impenitent."

Hunnius in the Theses Opposed to Huberianism, thesis 152: "We respond from the beginning that we consistently teach that Christ, by the decree, counsel, ordinance, good pleasure and command of the eternal Father, has freed *all mortals as one, with no one ever or anywhere excluded*, from sin, death, and eternal *damnation*."

In the Confutation preface, fol. 21: "That Christ *truly redeemed all people, with no one at all excluded*, is handed down by us."

The same with his colleagues, in Confession, 38: "Christ by the eternal decree of the Father redeemed from sin, death, the Devil and eternal condemnation all, all, all, as many as every lived and will live in the future."

You see how clear and splendid these things are from the Gospel? 1. *That we all are freed from anger*. 2. From punishment. 3. From death. 4. From sin. 5. From eternal condemnation. 6. In truth. Add to these now what was asserted in its own place, that we have been freed and reconciled powerfully and by the work, truly by the act of God. 7. That no person

ever or anywhere has been excluded from this accomplished freedom. This is the foundation of the entire Gospel.

They deny again:

Hunnius with his colleagues, in Confession, fol.30: “It bothers Huber very much that we cannot let his phrases be well with him, where he wrote, ‘Christ has given, or sent, to the entire human race redemption actually and in fact.’”

If properly and by the very work redemption was not given to the entire human race, it can also never be said that it has been redeemed from sin, death and eternal condemnation. For how are they redeemed, if redemption has not been given and offered? Here now also fit all those alleged things from their writings, that wrath has not been removed from us, that not all have been received into grace, that the sins of all people are not imputed to Christ, that God has not had mercy on all. For as long as they emphatically assert all these things, so long do they also deny the universal redemption of the human race, and they will not cease to scourge it until they have stirred up universal apostasy.

V.

On Justification

They say and affirm:

Gerlach in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians, Ch. 1: “*All people have redemption and life in Christ.*”

Next: “He is the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, that in him we might become the righteousness of God, that is, *that to all people Christ’s righteousness and merit are imputed, just as the sins of all people are imputed to Christ.* 2 Cor 5.” These things are from Gerlach.

How he likewise made it universal in the act of God was indicated above in its own place, and to this it pertains especially that they confessed a universal remission of sins, and even Gerlach, that in Christ all have life.

Here again they manifestly approve universal justification, in which the sins of all people were imputed to Christ. And you will carefully observe that the passage 2 Cor. 5 is extended upon all people without limitation together with reconciliation.

Again they deny:

Gerlach in the Theses Opposed to Huberianism, 185, 194, 208, 216, 219, 230.

He and his associates overturn the passage in Corinthians on universal justification again in par. 2, fol. 137: “Reconciling the world to himself, we accept as simply universal, but the following words: *‘Not imputing sins to them,’* we understand as limited, in the manner expressed in the word of God and according to Paul, Rom. 4, we interpret regarding the faithful.

There in fol. 120. “For Brenz does not want the justification of people to be universal to the extent that the benefit of redemption is universal, *which two things Huber took incorrectly in the same breadth.*”

Why should we argue with many more passages? Hunnius has written his theses against universal justification in the Disputation Opposed to Huber.

And so these are clear enough to show that they manifestly deny again that universal justification which was legitimately described beforehand in their own foundations, and by now it is continually evident they will deny that the sins of all people were imputed to Christ, or if they concede that they were imputed, they deny that they are offered as expiated satisfaction for all, and they make redemption from sin never approved in the judgment of God for the salvation of the human race.

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