

The Doctrine of the Theologians of Bremen : *Suffrage Delivered to the Synod of Dort*



***Editor's Note:**

The following text has been translated using AI.

On the First Article: On Predestination

Thesis I:

The decree of divine election, which is the foundation of the world, either from eternity, not on account of foreseen dignity, which is in the person, but from His own mere good pleasure, He established for the singular demonstration of His mercy and glory, from the corrupted mass of our first parents (Adam and Eve) and of the human race generally—particularly of miserable men—and to call them efficaciously to the participation of His grace, to justify, and to glorify them: for Christ, through Christ, and in Him.

And this decree of election is defined, complete, entire, one and the same: having regard to both the Old and New Testament together.

False and Heretical Teachings

1. That the decree of election, with respect to any goodness foreseen in us, foreseen acts, or a condition, or any human quality, was suspended.
2. That the good pleasure of God does not consist in this, that out of the mass of the corrupted human race, according to His most free will and grace, He chose some to salvation and left others; but only in this—that God willed to send His Son to reconcile the ignoble and unworthy world to Himself, under the condition of faith, to communicate salvation, to make believers out of those who believe, not by His gracious will, but by their own will, to the extent that He could grant salvation to all under a certain condition.
3. Likewise, that election is something indefinite and incomplete.
4. Further, that there is also a more general election outside of Christ, of those unbelievers to whom the gospel has not been communicated, who are corrected by the communion of grace, or who conceive some faith in God without knowledge of Christ and His merit.

5. That the whole decree of election is explained by the will of God to save the faithful, who persevere in the obedience of faith unto the end of life.

6. Finally, that there is one kind of election in the Old Testament and another under the New.

True Doctrine Confirmed by Scripture

Ephesians 1:4 – “[He chose] us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world.”

Verse 5 – “Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.”

Ephesians 1:6 – “To the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.”

Verse 7 – “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”

Exodus 33:19 — “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy to whom I will show mercy.”

Romans 9:15–16 — “For Moses says, ‘I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.’ So then it does not depend on the one who wills, or the one who runs, but on God who has mercy.”

Romans 8:29–30 — “Whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom He predestined, He also called; and those whom He called, He also justified; and those whom He justified, He also glorified.”

2 Timothy 1:9 — “Who (God) saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began.”

Thesis II:

Furthermore, this decree is most free, insofar as God has mercy on whom He wills.

It is most just, since it is established in Christ the Mediator, the appeaser of God’s wrath and the reconciler of men.

It is most kind, since it is at the same time ordained for the giving of saving grace and for the glory of God.

Confirmation:

Romans 9:11 — *“Though the children had not yet been born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of Him who calls...”*

Romans 9:14 — “What shall we say then? Is there injustice with God? Certainly not.”

Romans 9:15 — *“For He says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whom I have mercy...’”*

Romans 3:24–25 — *“Justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood...”*

1 Peter 1:2 — *“According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling with the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.”*

Romans 9:23 — *“In order to make known the riches of His glory for vessels of mercy, which He has prepared beforehand for glory.”*

2 Thessalonians 2:13–14 — *“But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Thesis III:

Saving faith and perseverance in it are the gracious fruits of this election, which God gives to all those and only those whom He has appointed to be brought infallibly to glory as members of Christ the Head.

We reject:

That faith flows forth from some singular disposition of man, in the choosing of a prerequisite, by which God is moved to choose some, and by which such dignity comes to the man that he should be worthier in his election than another; not, however, that faith should be the fruit of that gracious election.

Doctrine and True Confirmation

Romans 8:30 — “Whom He predestined, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified.”

Acts 13:48 — “And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”

Thesis IV:

This election is always certain and immutable, because God will certainly and efficaciously fulfill what He has decreed to do.

We Reject:

That no one in this life or death can be certainly elect; or that election can be changed or revoked, such that the elect can become reprobate; and thus, that the number of the elect can be increased or diminished.

Doctrine and True Confirmation

Isaiah 46:9–10 — “Remember the former things of old; I am God... declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.’”

Malachi 3:6 — “I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.”

Tobit 13:9 — “He Himself is our God forever and ever, and He will deliver us from all evil.”

Romans 9:11 — “Though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of Him who calls.”

2 Timothy 2:19 — “The foundation of God stands firm, having this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are His.’”

Thesis V:

This election is revealed to us in time, when by the Word and Spirit of God we are regenerated, effectively called, believe in Christ, live in holiness, and conceive a sure hope of eternal glory.

We Reject:

That in this life, no one can be certain of their election, unless by extraordinary and special revelation.

1 Corinthians 1:26, etc. – *“Consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards... but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise.”*

1 John 4:12–13 – *“If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.”*

Romans 8:15 – *“You did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.”*

Thesis VI:

The fruits of this election in this life are certain and great—namely, the believer’s assurance after calling and justification, a constant faith, joy in the Holy Spirit, sincere love toward God and neighbor, a sure and patient expectation of future blessedness, and comfort in life amid many trials, greater still in death itself, and complete joy and glory in the resurrection of the body.

We Reject:

That the sense of this election is uncertain, or that the fruits of it in this life are so uncertain, that God leaves men in suspense, or that no one can be certain of their election except by special revelation concerning the present or future state of divine grace and glory.

Doctrine and True Confirmation

2 Corinthians 1:20, etc. – “*All the promises of God find their Yes in Him. That is why it is through Him that we utter our Amen to God for His glory. And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and who has also put His seal on us and given us His Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.*”

Isaiah 44:3–5 — “*I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring... This one will say, ‘I am the Lord’s,’ another will call on the name of Jacob, and another will write on his hand, ‘The Lord’s,’ and name himself by the name of Israel.*”

Romans 5:1–2 — “*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*”

Romans 8:38 — “*For I am persuaded that neither death nor life... shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”

Thesis VII:

This grace, in no way deserved or earned by us, ought to inflame us with love, that we may ardently return to God in love; striving to be holy and blameless before Him in charity, and to fight steadfastly against the flesh, the world, and the devil.

We Reject:

That the elect, being certain of their salvation, may live as they please, and that it will also be without consequence to them in the future.

Doctrine Confirmed by Scripture

Deuteronomy 10:12 – “*And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul?*”

Micah 6:8 – “*He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?*”

Ephesians 1:4 – “*He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love.*”

Ephesians 2:10 – “*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*”

Romans 8:12 – “*So then, brothers, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.*”

Romans 6:22 – “*But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification, and its end, eternal life.*”

Thesis VIII:

Concerning the children of the faithful, who die before reaching the age capable of understanding doctrine: We affirm that they are chosen and saved by the pure good pleasure of God, according to His covenantal grace, through Christ and in Christ, just as adults are, since they are part of the covenant and are sanctified.

Hence, they are to be confirmed by the sacrament of baptism, are initiated thereby into the covenant of grace, and are clothed with Christ.

Matthew 19:13–14 – “Then children were brought to Him that He might lay His hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, but Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.’”

Genesis 17:7 – “*I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.*”

Acts 2:39 – “*For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself.*”

1 Corinthians 7:14 – “*For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.*”

On Reprobation

Thesis I.

God, to illustrate the glory of His justice and power, has, by His most free authority from eternity, ordained that certain individuals from fallen humanity, whom He did not will to show mercy to in Christ unto salvation, He would instead leave in their sin and under His wrath to be condemned.

And this decree is eternal, immutable, complete, unique, and entire—properly that of reprobation, just as election is—with reference to both Testaments.

Romans 9:19; 9:22 – *“Who has resisted His will?... vessels of wrath prepared for destruction.”*

Romans 9:11 – *“Though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad...”*

We reject :

That God reprobated or decreed to condemn men apart from the consideration of sin; That reprobation is based on some quality or condition in man, such as lack of fitness for election; Or that God would have willed all men to be saved, had they not themselves excluded themselves from it; That the number of the reprobate is uncertain before God; That reprobation is incomplete, revocable, or changeable; Or that any of the reprobate might later be chosen, or the number of the reprobate increased or diminished; That there is one kind of reprobation under the Old Testament and another under the New.

Doctrine Confirmed by Scripture

Romans 9:11-13 – *“Though they were not yet born, and had done nothing either good or bad, in order that God’s purpose of election might stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, ‘The older will serve the younger.’ As it is written: ‘Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.’”*

Romans 9:18 – *“So then He has mercy on whomever He wills, and He hardens whomever He wills.”*

Verse 19 – *“You will say to me then, ‘Why does He still find fault? For who can resist His will?’”*

Verse 20 – *“But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, ‘Why have you made me like this?’”*

Verse 21 – *“Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?”*

Verse 22 – *“What if God, desiring to show His wrath and to make known His power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction...”*

Thesis II.

Therefore, all who are damned are justly damned because of their sins.

We reject:

That guilt, or the reason why many perish, lies in God.

Confirmation

Matthew 7:23 – *“Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”*

Thesis III.

Therefore, from the equally undeserving, God calls certain persons by the preaching of the gospel, and passes over others, according to the most free counsel of His will. Those whom He does not call, He passes over by a just judgment and by His most free will.

We reject the idea:

That God's passing over others while calling some is due to some worthiness or fitness in those He calls; Or that it is due to some hidden quality in them, or anything other than the common corruption of mankind.

Scriptural Confirmation

Romans 9:16 – *“It depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who has mercy.”*

Romans 9:22–23 – *“What if God, desiring to show His wrath and make known His power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction... in order to make known the riches of His glory for vessels of mercy...”*

Romans 11:5–7 – *“The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened.”*

Isaiah 1:9 – “*If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom...*”

Deuteronomy 4:34, etc.

John 24:2, etc.

***Editor's Note: The following will contain three views on the death of Christ, The first is from Martinius, then Iselburg, lastly Crocius.**

On the Second Article: On the fruit of Christ's death for all

When about to speak on the fruit of Christ's death, it is fitting to follow the son of Ambrose, who said (Book 5, on Luke 7): “If Christ died for all, yet especially for us, then He truly died for all.” Therefore, we begin with this point:

I.

Christ died for all men.

There is a certain general love of God, by which He loved the whole fallen human race and seriously willed the salvation of all.

II.

The execution of this appears in the general external calling, which comes both to the elect and the reprobate, although God, according to the liberty of His own will, justly passes over many.

III.

This external calling is contained in the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments.

IV.

In this calling are included a historical narrative of Christ, commands to believe, threats of damnation against unbelievers, and the declaration that the one who does not believe is already condemned, and that this condemnation occurs because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:18).

V.

This tragic outcome is not intended by God in itself, but follows from the guilt of man incidentally.

VI.

Therefore, this execution of grace, offered commonly to elect and reprobate alike, depends on a certain general love of God. And this is acknowledged by the most excellent and sincere theologians and is most clearly taught throughout the whole of Scripture.

VII.

Moreover, that external calling, whose parts were listed above, necessarily presupposes this: the promise and sending forth of Christ. He was to come in the future, is now come, and has accomplished redemption—that is, full satisfaction and payment to expiate sins and appease God. God, fully content with that one unique offering, does not require any other satisfaction for sin, nor any other merit. The only thing required now is that this benefit be applied, as a medicine, to the individual.

VIII.

If this redemption, as a common benefit, is not regarded as sincerely offered to all men, and if the general preaching of the Gospel—entrusted to the Apostles and to be declared among all nations—is not based on this, then it has no true foundation.

IX.

Therefore, we must consider how the most renowned and clear Reformed teachers speak, who unanimously and simply assert that Christ died for all men.

X.

It is not enough to say that the power of this redemption is sufficient—that it would be sufficient if offered, or would be sufficient if God and Christ willed it to be applied. Rather, that sufficiency must be joined to the divine mandate and the evangelical promise.

XI.

For how can it truly be called a benefit, even if it is sufficient in itself, if it was never truly intended for me? A benefit cannot be rightly called such unless it is joined to a real opportunity and intention that I might believe it and receive it.

XII.

What then shall we say of that redemption? This redemption is found in the new world, just as the image of God was found in the old creation. Just as the image of God is not man's essence itself, but that by which the divine image is expressed, so also redemption is not the essence of God, but that by which the entire administration of Christ's prophetic, royal, and priestly office is carried out. Still, care must be taken that this comparison not be extended too far.

XIV.

And therefore, when we come across someone and announce to him this saving grace (which belongs to believers alone unto salvation) as preachers and ambassadors, we do so by office—not because we know he is one of the faithful, but because the command is general.

XV.

But this redemption is not itself a part of the image of God in us. Yet it is such that without the restoration of the image of God, it can neither be offered in external calling nor conveyed in internal calling, justification, sanctification, or glorification. Therefore, it is in some way related to the image of God as its foundation, though not as a cause.

XVI.

This redemption was accomplished by the death of Christ (by which I mean His entire obedience, humiliation, especially His bloodshed and crucifixion). It is by this death, as the price of satisfaction and merit, that the Church is accustomed to describe the true power of Christ's death in its proper terms.

XVII.

But even this must be carefully explained. Satisfaction is made for all evil, and merit for all good—with a double exception: one concerning things, the other concerning persons.

XVIII.

The exception concerning things is this: that Christ did not satisfy, nor did He will to satisfy, for the impenitence of those who persist in it, and much less for the obstinacy of those who remain hardened. This includes contempt of grace or rejection of the benefactor, and such blasphemy or malice as is found in those who sin against the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 10:26).

XIX.

From this it follows that the wrath of God remains over the unbelieving, and all their sins—original and actual, against law and Gospel alike—are imputed to them.

XX.

But those to whom the Gospel has not been made known are still justly condemned, either under the law—whether written or unwritten—or under the law of nature, as Paul teaches in Romans 2:12. Add also the many evils that they bring upon themselves by sinning against God, the Church, and the Gospel, when it does reach them.

XXI.

The Lord has merited grace for all men; but not all receive it, since this depends on singular election. What then does He offer? That which is promised under the condition of faith. For forgiveness of sins and eternal life are certainly promised to all men, if they believe. Here it is evident that the remission of sins and salvation, conditionally, pertain to all—but not the power to believe or the actual response by which the condition is fulfilled. These are things which men owe to God by the strength of His command; but their inability to do them is their own fault, not His.

XXII.

The exception regarding persons is this: although Christ has promised forgiveness to all who believe, He has not merited that all will believe and thus receive remission. For only those are pardoned who, by the gift of faith, are inwardly united to God's will and, in the final judgment, are declared to have received this remission.

XXIII.

And from this, the distinction in merit is also clear: Christ has merited the favor of God for all, so that they may obtain righteousness and life if they believe, and thus they may receive justification and life out of God's favor.

XXIV.

God reveals this favor through the Word of the Gospel commonly. But since the merit of the Son is not owed to us but is given and offered by God's own purpose and power, He governs its proclamation—sending it when, where, and to whom He wills, and with as much effectiveness as He pleases.

XXV.

The main reasons why I follow this opinion are three:

1. That the Scriptures may be harmonized without distortion.
2. That the glory of God's truth, mercy, and justice may remain intact in His commands, promises, and evangelical warnings, rather than portraying God as acting in vain or contrary to His nature.

3. That it may be clearly evident that the fault for the unbelief of the wicked lies in themselves alone, not in the lack of a remedy by which they could have been saved.

Therefore, I follow and affirm what is taught in the Explications of the Catechism of Ursinus, especially on pages 256, 257, and 258. Among them is this:

Christ died meritoriously and sufficiently for all men; but the application and efficacy of this death is for the elect alone—a sentence supported by many Fathers and Scholastic doctors, and frequently cited and approved by the Reformed churches. It is found simply and clearly in Scripture wherever the matter is treated most plainly and faithfully.

On the Death of Christ for the Elect Alone

I.

“For us,” says Ambrose, “Christ especially died.”

II.

And this accords precisely with the decree that we previously discussed.

III.

This is the decree of particular election, which we addressed under the First Article.

IV.

But since this decree is not directed toward all in common, but toward particular benefits—namely, the grace of regeneration, effectual calling, justification, and glorification—it follows that Christ died only for the elect in such a way that those goods (and whatever belongs to that kind) are not merely made possible to any and all, but are actually merited, obtained, acquired, and efficaciously communicated to them, and richly applied to them.

V.

And since to these alone faith is granted as the instrument of application, the remaining common benefits—which I previously said arise from the fountain of common love—pass over the unbelievers because they do not remain in them. Instead, they are poured into the elect alone, to whom they alone are useful.

VI.

He who despises the offering of Christ made on the cross loses all right he could have had in it, and thereby increases his own condemnation. He who also scorns the offering of Christ made in the Gospel deprives himself of that same benefit and brings about his own ruin.

VII.

Thus Christ, being appointed as a cause in His resurrection, and also in the Gospel (which by itself is a savor of life unto life), becomes for the unbelieving a savor of death unto death—not by its own nature, but incidentally through the fault of man.

Errors

Errors contrary to the Second Article:

1. That Christ in no way died for those who perish.
2. That the universal death of Christ cannot stand alongside the decree of particular election.
3. That God appointed Christ as Mediator before any decree of love or grace had been made toward any individual.
4. That the merits of Christ consist only in dignity, not in efficacy, and have never been applied to anyone.
5. That redemption could have been obtained for the elect, but still applied to none.
6. That all men can remain in unbelief—even regarding the decree of God—if no decree is effectual enough to produce faith in them, even if they are able and willing to believe.
7. That the end of Christ's death involved no application at all.
8. That even though the redemption of the world was accomplished by Christ, God could still require works or conditions in order to obtain salvation.
9. That the intention of God in delivering the Son to death was absolutely to bring salvation to all.
10. That God gave Christ to redeem and save each and every person equally.
11. That the power of Christ's redemption is effectual in actually reconciling all men to God.

12. That those who die in impenitence still remain in the death of Christ.
13. That Christ is the priest of all men equally, through intercession and application.
14. That the death and resurrection of Christ do not apply to the elect alone.
15. That the proper and entire end of Christ's death was only that God could offer grace to mankind and will that it be communicated to them.

Against the confusions of Huberus and Puccius, we confess the following:

Christ died for all and every person, not only in regard to sufficiency, but also—concerning efficacy—for the dead. Even those who are not liberated by Him, nor sanctified, nor justified, nor restored to the grace of God. The benefits of Christ are only applied to the saved, that is, to the elect alone—whether they be from the Jews, Turks, Saracens, or from among all the peoples of the Gentiles—who are sanctified by His grace and counted among the Christians.

Subscribed and signed:

Martinius of the Republic of Bremen,

delegate to the National Synod.

On the Second Article

To clarify the Second Article concerning the death of Christ and its fruitful and efficacious outcomes, various views have been put forward—both by orthodox men and by sectarians and lovers of heterodoxy.

The question at hand is primarily this: whether God the Father, in delivering His Son to death, and the Son in offering Himself unto death, intended to reconcile and save each and every individual man to God. Likewise, whether our Lord Jesus Christ, by His death, without exception, obtained reconciliation with God, forgiveness of sins, and the inheritance of eternal life for all men; or whether this is not efficaciously applied to all.

And I see that many most excellent men—highly praised in the orthodox Church—speak very diversely on this subject, and with great seriousness of opinion.

Those who, modestly, sincerely, and without disturbing the peace of the Church, propose their own opinion—nor do they burn with hatred toward those who hold the cross of Christ—should not be condemned or anathematized for using different names in describing the same thing.

Nevertheless, keeping their caution in view, and with a mind for the peace of the Church, it seems to us that we ought to agree with the Holy Scriptures and the reasoning of sound doctrine, and we establish the following accordingly.

Philippians 3:15–18: *“Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Be followers together of me, brethren, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example.”*

Thesis I.

The dignity and power of Christ’s passion, death, and merit is such that by its nature it is abundantly sufficient for expiating and removing all the sins of all men, and for obtaining and conferring reconciliation with God, grace, righteousness, and eternal life upon all people universally and individually.

Therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ is not proposed or offered only to certain ones predestined for salvation, but indifferently, to both the elect and reprobate, in the preaching of the Gospel as the medicine for sin and death. He is proposed and offered so that all and each may be invited to partake of Him, whether by enjoyment or by striving for eternal salvation. All are indiscriminately urged to believe in Christ, live through Him, and come to a knowledge of the truth sincerely and seriously; and those who do not believe in the name of the Son of God are justly condemned.

Hence, Christ is rightly said to have died sufficiently for all, so that all who believe in Him and seek the benefit of His death might obtain reconciliation, the remission of sins, and the inheritance of eternal life. They both can and ought to obtain this.

For the blood and merit of the Son of God—of the only-begotten of the Father—are sufficient:

John 1:14, *“And the Word became flesh...”*

1 Timothy 3:16, *“God was manifested in the flesh...”*

John 1:1, *“In the beginning was the Word...”*

Romans 9:5, *“...Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever.”*

Also, John 1:9, “*The true light, who enlightens every man, was coming into the world.*”

What then could justly be lacking in His merit? Whatever the Father has is His.

John 16:13, “*All things that the Father has are mine.*”

Philippians 3:21, “*He is able to subject all things to Himself.*”

Hebrews 1:3, “*He upholds all things by the word of His power.*”

He proved His authority to forgive sins by doctrine and miracles:

Matthew 9:6, “*But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...*”

Matthew 28:19, “*Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations...*”

1 Timothy 2:4, “*God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*”

c. Mark 16:16, “*He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned.*”

John 3:36, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.”

John 3:18, “*Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.*”

No sin of any mortal is so great that the expiation of Christ’s sacrifice is not sufficient for it. Nor is there anyone from the human race so estranged or alienated that Christ’s merit would not be able to cover them, except Satan and evil angels.

And this is the will and intention of God from eternity—that the death of Christ would be sufficient for all. So much so, that God would not require any other victim for human sins except this one alone, which is all-sufficient (except for the case of those with final impenitence or the

sin against the Holy Spirit). It is sufficient for covering every evil and for securing every good necessary for salvation. Nothing else is needed for human merit.

Therefore, no one among the reprobate is damned or perishes because of some defect in the death of Christ, or because there was not sufficient healing power in it to save them. Rather, they are damned because of their own guilt and their own fault.

Thesis II

Even though many of the reprobate, by the merit of Christ, receive the preaching of the Gospel, the external call, and similar common gifts yet God neither willed nor was obligated to give to all and each individual indiscriminately (even those who never believe or will believe), such gifts according to the most just decree of divine reprobation, under sin and wrath. These people perish for their sins, and by their own guilt, not having been predestined to grace or salvation. Christ did not intercede for them. He did not establish the covenant of grace for them, nor reconcile them to God, nor merit the remission of sins or the inheritance of life eternal for them. Nor did He apply the benefits of the Gospel to them in an indiscriminate manner.

Matthew 11:28. *“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”*

John 3:17. *“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but so that the world might be saved through Him.”*

Isaiah 1:18. *“Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.”*

1 Thessalonians 3.

Hebrews 2:16. *“For surely it is not angels He helps, but He helps the offspring of Abraham”*

“In Him the Father is well pleased,” Matthew 3:17 and 17:5.

Matthew 12:31. *“Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.”*

Verse 32. *“And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.”*

Mark 3:29. *“Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.”*

Hebrews 10:26–27. *“For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.”*

John 3:19. *“This is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.”*

Antitheses I reject:

Furthermore, just as the preaching of the Gospel and similar gifts are common to the reprobate, so also he willed and was obliged to restore unto a new covenant and state of salvific grace, through his death, by the act itself and in reality, each and every man (also those, that is, who never believe in him, or will believe in him, but from the most just decree of God of Reprobation, are left under sin and the wrath of God, and perish because of their sins); and to impetrare and acquire for them reconciliation with God, and remission of all sins, and the inheritance of eternal life. He also obtained these in the aforesaid way for all indiscriminately.

Concerning the second thesis

(Matthew 20:16) Many are called. For Christ never knew those impious ones (Matthew 7:23)
Nor did He pray for them. (John 17:6)

Moreover, the wicked are said to be vessels of wrath prepared for destruction. (Romans 9:22)
And God does not will to show mercy to them. Ibid., verse 18.

Therefore, they are compared to dogs. (Psalm 22:13,17; Isaiah 56:10) (in Tremellius), chapter 57:3.

Likewise, they are swine. (Matthew 7:6) And the Lord expressly forbids holy things to be given to them, or pearls to be cast before them. Ibid.

But what is holier, what pearl more precious than the most holy and most precious merit of Christ?

Furthermore, these are sons of Belial and of darkness, with whom Christ has no communion. (2 Corinthians 6:14). They are the tares and sons of the evil one, that is, of Satan. (Matthew 13:8, 40, 41, 42). They are to be thrown into the furnace of fire. Ibid., verse 42. And they are far removed from the saints, who do not seek God's statutes. (Psalm 119:155). They are an abomination to the Lord. (Proverbs 15:8) And the Lord is far from them. Ibid., verse 29.

They do not remain in Christ's word. (John 5:36)

Whoever does not remain in Christ is cast out as a branch and withers. Whence also God does not send the preaching of the Gospel to many.

(Psalm 147:19, 20) He declares His word to Jacob... He has not dealt thus with any other nation. He does not even give them external calling. (Acts 16:6) (Matthew 20:16). Many are called, but few are chosen.

Thesis III

But only for His sheep, He chose whether for all and each of the faithful, and in their place and for their benefit, Christ laid down His life, or died—He is in this sense their saving Priest, Propitiator, and Victim; reconciling them alone to the Father by His very act, and obtaining for them the remission of sins, righteousness, and the inheritance of eternal life; not as if they themselves had rendered to God sufficient satisfaction, or had paid their debts.

Christ has obtained from the Father the remission of all sins for the faithful; so that He has not only satisfied for those sins that they committed as part of the general fall and lapse (as shared in common by all), but also for those which are singular and personal—sins committed after they have been called and brought into participation in divine grace, and after they have been ingrafted into Christ by faith—whatever those sins may be.

Antithesis III

Not, however, only for His sheep, but also for all and each of the faithful, and in their place and for their benefit, Christ laid down His life or died; in this sense, that He is their priest and propitiator and victim, reconciling them alone to the Father by His own act, and obtaining for them the remission of sins, righteousness, and the inheritance of eternal life—not as if they themselves had rendered satisfaction or paid what was owed.

Nor did He suffer for the faithful and the unfaithful in any other way than insofar as they are considered under the common fall and guilt of sin.

In the third thesis.

For Christ prayed only for His own. (John 17:9)

Therefore, the merit of Christ is referred to the elect and the faithful and to those who obey Christ. (Matthew 21)

Acts 20:28: *Pay attention therefore to yourselves and to the whole flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the Church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood.*

Romans 10:4: *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*

Hebrews 5:9: *And being made perfect, He became the cause of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.*

Ephesians 5:25: *Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it.*

Hence, the Lord is said to have laid down His life for many.

Isaiah 53:11: *He shall justify many by His knowledge, for He shall bear their iniquities.*

Matthew 20:28: *Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.*

Matthew 26:28: *This is My blood of the New Covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*

He also names His sheep.

John 10:15: *As the Father knows Me, and I know the Father, and I lay down My life for the sheep.*

These, and no others, receive the forgiveness of sins through the name of Christ.

Acts 10:43: *To Him all the prophets bear witness, that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.*

From this arises the prerogative and solid consolation of the faithful and the godly: hence they are blessed, because their iniquities have been forgiven. (Psalm 32:2. Romans 4:6.)

Hence the certain hope of salvation and glory. (Romans 5:10–11)

Hence they are secure from the assaults of Satan and the ungodly. (Romans 8:34) For our iniquities were laid upon Him, and likewise the penalty. (Isaiah 53:4–6) He poured out His soul unto death for us. (Luke 22:20) And Christ died. (Romans 5:8)

Psalm 103:3: *He who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases...*

Isaiah 53:12, 14: *He bore the sins of many and made intercession for transgressors.*

1 John 1:7: *The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*

And now He is our Advocate. (1 John 2:1)

Thesis IV

And this also was the will and intention of the Father and the Son: that only those who would be brought to true faith in Christ should be restored into a state of saving grace, and that reconciliation with God, the remission of sins, and salvation should be obtained for them.

Antithesis IV

And this also was the will and intention of the Father and the Son: not only that those who would come to faith in Christ should be restored, but that all men without distinction should be restored into a state of saving grace, receive reconciliation with God, the remission of sins, and salvation.

In the Fourth Thesis

John 3:16: *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”*

Romans 3:25: *“Whom God has set forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood, for a demonstration of His righteousness.”*

Thesis V

Whoever Christ reconciled to the Father through His death, to all those—and to them alone—He truly, certainly, and absolutely obtained reconciliation with God, the remission of all their sins, and He applies and preserves it by His will. And He did not obtain this only under some conditional will, which depends on the decision of man's free will, as if He merely desired to apply these benefits to men under such a condition.

Antithesis V

But not to all and only those whom Christ reconciled to the Father through His death did He obtain reconciliation with God, the remission of all their sins, and apply and preserve it by a certain and absolute will. Rather, He obtained it under some conditional will, which depends on the decision of man's free will, as if He merely desired to apply these benefits to men under such a condition.

In the Fifth Thesis

Acts 5:31: *"This one God exalted at His right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and the forgiveness of sins."*

Hebrews 10:14: *"For by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified."*

Romans 8:32: *"He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?"*

Thesis VI

In all and each of those whom Christ reconciled to the Father by His death, He works by the power and grace of His Spirit in such a way that they truly have peace with God, and embrace the reconciliation obtained through Christ with a cheerful and grateful heart, being united to it by faith, and make progress through it unto the end of eternal life, until at last they obtain salvation and eternal life through that same death and resurrection of Christ.

And the procurement of reconciliation and remission of sins through Christ, and the application of these benefits, extends equally and as widely.

Antithesis VI

Nor in all and each of those whom Christ reconciled to the Father by His death does He work by the power and grace of the Spirit in such a way that they truly have peace with God, and embrace the reconciliation obtained with a cheerful and grateful heart, being united to it by faith, and make progress through it unto the end of eternal life, until at last they obtain salvation and eternal life through the death and resurrection of Christ.

And so the procurement of reconciliation and the remission of sins through Christ does not extend equally as far as the application of these benefits.

In the Sixth Thesis

Jeremiah 31:33–34: “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts... and I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Romans 6:9–10: “We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death He died He died to sin, once for all, but the life He lives He lives to God.”

Romans 5:10–11: “For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”

Hebrews 2:15: “And to deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.”

Thesis VII

For those, and in the place of whom, the Lord died to expiate their sins, to them also the fruits of His resurrection and intercession extend; He rose again for their justification, intercedes for them before the Father, and efficaciously bestows salvation upon them.

Nor can these be separated—indeed, they can much less be separated—the individual connection is so linked that to whomever He has obtained reconciliation with God, and remission of sins, to those also He applies it, and unfailingly and graciously bestows and preserves for them eternal salvation.

Antithesis VII

For those, and in the place of whom, the Lord died to expiate their sins, not to them also are the fruits of His resurrection and intercession extended; nor did He rise again for their justification, nor intercede for them before the Father, that salvation might efficaciously be bestowed on them.

But these can be separated, and are often thought to be separated, since the individual connection is not such that to whomever reconciliation with God and remission of sins has been obtained, to them also it is applied, and salvation is unfailingly and graciously bestowed and preserved for them.

In the Seventh Thesis

Romans 4:25: "*He was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.*"

And chapter 6:4–5: "*We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.*"

Romans 8:34: "*Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.*"

Thesis VIII

Thus indeed it is truly and abundantly established that the imprecation [i.e., obtaining] through Christ has its own worth, necessity, and usefulness; so that to the sons of God, or all the godly, it is a firm and solid consolation in life and in death. But if the redemption obtained were not actually applied to anyone, and no one were saved through it, then it would not be so.

Antithesis VIII

And nevertheless it is truly and abundantly established that the imprecation through Christ has its own worth, necessity, and usefulness, even if the redemption obtained had never been actually applied to any individual: for it could have been obtained for all, and yet applied to none because of the intervening unbelief of all.

Thesis IX

Thus also Christ obtains the end truly intended by God, since He not only brings it about that His merit can be applied to men (namely, to whomsoever God wills), whether God, in accordance with His justice, could save the sinner, and the sinner, despite his sin, could be saved—that is, that a new covenant of grace could be entered into and established with sinners and those liable to damnation, and that God might will to assume the whole human race into a state of reconciliation with Himself—but also brings it about that, when in addition the virtue of His Spirit is present, He actually bestows upon them that saving grace of God, righteousness, and eternal life, and all other things which He has acquired and obtained for them by His death.

Antithesis IX

Thus also Christ obtains the end truly intended by God, since He not only brings it about that His merit can be applied to men (namely, to whomsoever God wills), whether God, in accordance with His justice, could save the sinner, and the sinner, despite his sin, could be saved—that is, that a new covenant of grace could be entered into and established with sinners and those liable to damnation, and that God might will to assume the whole human race into a state of reconciliation with Himself—but not that, when in addition the virtue of the Spirit of redemption is present, He actually bestows upon them that saving grace of God, righteousness, and eternal life, and all other things which He has acquired and obtained for them by His death.

In the Ninth Thesis

Romans 8:33–34, 38–39: “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us... For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Continuation

Joel 2:27–28, 29: “And you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God and there is none else. And my people shall never again be put to shame. And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh...”

John 10:28: “And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.”

John 14:3: "*I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am, you may be also.*"

John 17:24: "*Father, I desire that those whom You have given me may be with me where I am, to see my glory that You have given me, because You loved me before the foundation of the world.*"

Thesis X

Thus God appointed Christ to be a Mediator with a particular intention and will, to redeem certain individuals from the human race, and to bring them to eternal salvation.

Antithesis X

God did not appoint Christ as Mediator with a particular intention and will to redeem certain individuals from the human race and to bring them to eternal salvation.

In the Tenth Thesis

John 10:29: "*My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.*"

Thesis XI

And at the same time, He established this condition and way of possessing and enjoying the said benefits: namely, that by the power of the Holy Spirit we are grafted into Christ through true faith and embrace His benefits. Nor does it befit the godly or anyone else to seek another way, apart from that one alone which is revealed to us in the Scriptures. Should we labor and inquire, and not rather acknowledge that no other way than the means of faith could apply the merit of His Son to us, and should we prescribe the condition of salvation as works equally with faith?

Antithesis XI

Indeed, the enjoyment and participation in the said benefits is conditioned upon and occurs through the power of the Holy Spirit by being grafted into Christ through faith and embracing His benefits. Yet it would not be unworthy of the godly—even if we were to suppose that He could, if

He wished, apply the merit of His Son to us by some other means—to prescribe the condition of salvation equally by works as well as by faith.

In the Eleventh Thesis

John 3:36: “*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.*”

And chapter 5:24: “*Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.*”

Acts 10:43: “*To Him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.*”

Deuteronomy 29:29: “*The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.*”

Henricus Iselburg, Doctor of Sacred Theology and Minister in the Church and School of Bremen.

Servant of Jesus Christ.

On the Second Article of the Remonstrants

Which is:

On the Controversy Concerning the Universality of the Merit of Christ’s Death

The Question:

Whether Jesus Christ died for each and every human being, in such a way that by the death of the cross, reconciliation and the remission of sins was obtained for all people.

THE JUDGMENT

I.

The worth, price, power, value, and sufficiency of the death of Christ are such that nothing at all is lacking for it to procure, acquire, and obtain reconciliation with God and the remission of sins for all and each individual of the human race.

II.

Not only was it the will of God the Father to hand over His Son to death, but it was also the will, purpose, and intention of the Son Himself in His death to obtain and acquire by His most precious suffering—for all and each person—the reconciliation with God and the remission of sins, so that, when they become capable of receiving this doctrine and believe in Christ, they may be reconciled to God and receive the remission of sins.

III.

Christ, by the counsel of His Father and His own, suffered and died for all and each individual of the human race, and has most sufficiently merited for all and each sinful person the forgiveness of sins—so that, if they repent and believe, they can be reconciled to God, that is, be restored to His grace and favor.

IV.

Christ, by His own will and that of the Father, by His death and passion, has reconciled to God all and only those individuals who believe, and He has restored them to His favor. He has not acquired or obtained actual reconciliation with God, or the remission of sins and eternal life, for the impenitent, the unbelieving, the finally impenitent, the despisers of His Gospel, or for those who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit.

V.

This doctrine, as most true and grounded in Scripture, the nature of the matter, the Church, and even the Bremen Confession, and the common and most weighty consensus of the Fathers and Theologians of old, which must be preserved purely and holily in the Church of God, I judge must necessarily be held, defended, and confessed both for the glory of God (in whose light the truth of His calling, the sincerity of His promises, and the edification of all serious readers of Scripture is made manifest), and for the comfort of the called in true faith and piety, and lastly for the healthy rejection of various heresies, errors, and deviations, which, like the Scopuli [i.e., hidden rocks], surround the truth and threaten ruin.

Wherefore, the following doctrines, which are contrary to Scripture and experience, are to be rejected and condemned by the Church of God:

1. That Christ died for all and each individual human being, not only with regard to sufficiency, but also to efficacy, even for those who do not believe, and that through His death He obtained for them liberation, regeneration, righteousness, sanctification, and the restoration of divine favor and salvation; so that all Turks, Saracens, Centaurs, Cannibals, and the entire race of the unbaptized are made free and holy, just like Christians.
2. That God appointed Christ to be a Mediator before any foresight, will, or intention of mercy toward the fallen human race.
3. That the merit of Christ could consist in its dignity, necessity, and usefulness, even if it were never applied to any individual.
4. That all people could remain in unbelief, even in regard to the decree of God, without that decree being efficacious for bestowing faith to those who would believe infallibly and constantly.
5. That the end of Christ's death was in no way its application.
6. That the redemption obtained by Christ could have been applied equally to all persons, if only God had willed to prescribe the condition of works or salvation. That it was the intention of God the Father in delivering His Son to death to absolutely bestow salvation on all.
7. That the price of Christ's redemption is equally efficacious for reconciling and saving all and each individual of mankind.
8. That God willed that all and each human being should be equally redeemed and saved by Christ.
9. That even those who die in impenitence have in Christ's death a right to salvation.
10. That the proper and full merit of Christ's death would be of no more use if it did not also bring with it the actual offer and possibility of obtaining the grace of the covenant for all men.
11. That Christ, by His death and satisfaction, did not acquire or obtain any gift or promise of the New Covenant.
12. That the will and intention of God was that Christ's merit be applied to all and each individual only conditionally, or as a desire, in the event that any individual should fulfill the conditions of the New Covenant—if they were to perform the prescribed works, or if they were to produce an efficacious grace for the act of believing in certain persons, etc.

Thus, and not otherwise, I think, judge, and determine on this question, and whenever it is useful or necessary, by God's help, I will defend and show this as I have set it down.

Ludovicus Crocius,

Doctor of Sacred Theology, of the Republic of Bremen,

Delegate to the National Synod

Bremen Sentence – On Articles III & IV

On Regeneration in General

I. Regeneration is the saving work of the grace of God, by which He makes us, who are unbelieving by nature and not sons, into His sons, and sanctifies our impure nature.

II. In order to understand this, we must see:

1. What is being renewed?
2. By what and through what?
3. In what manner?

III. The old man is renewed primarily in the intellect and the will, with all his faculties, by the power of God through the Word and the Holy Spirit, in a work that is irresistible.

On Intellect and Will, i.e. Free Will

I. Intellectual actions are: to recognize, then to judge, to assert or deny something, to gather one thing from another, or to doubt. The will then assents or dissents to things proposed or suspends judgment.

II. We understand that some things are necessary in themselves, and their opposites are impossible; other things are not so, and are objects of deliberation and choice. In such matters, we can will freely, and the opposite of what we will remains possible.

III. Just as God inclines and determines our free will, He does so without taking away freedom, and always inclines it well and toward the good.

IV. The will cannot use its natural strength for any saving good. It is not enough that God concurs; the special work of the Spirit is needed to go before, move, and enable the will, and to protect it against the assaults of Satan and internal resistance.

V. Therefore, God acts in us according to His gracious purpose, through His singular grace. He infuses into us the gifts of His Spirit, and we willingly accept them, since grace makes us both willing and able to accept what is necessary for our salvation.

VI. Free will is considered in four states:

1. Innocence
2. Misery
3. Grace
4. Glory

VII. In the state of innocence, the will was free from sin and punishment, yet mutable.

VIII. In the state of misery, it remains free in civil and external matters, but not in spiritual ones. It is under the bondage of sin.

IX. In the state of grace, God regenerates the will. He draws and converts man, giving new inclinations and affections, so that he desires and chooses good.

X. In the state of glory, the will will be completely free from all sin and misery.

On the Grace of God

I. Although the term “grace” is broad by nature, here it is taken specifically as it pertains to the grace of calling—i.e., the grace of vocation.

II. God dispenses saving grace by His Word and Spirit.

III. Through the Word of the Law, God prepares man by showing him his misery and despair of self-righteousness. Then He teaches him the Gospel and leads him to Christ by faith.

IV. What is the proper and unique feature of the elect?

Response: That by singular grace, they are effectually drawn to Christ by the Spirit. They not only hear the outward call but receive internal illumination, assent, and faith. They find rest in the merit of Christ and accept God's favor. They love God with filial affection and persevere to the end.

V. What is the grace of conversion and regeneration, and is it resistible or irresistible?

Response: Grace is broadly defined. But in this context, we distinguish:

- The external preaching of the Gospel
- The internal illumination and conversion granted to the elect

True regeneration is understood to be singular, internal, and effective.

VI. External preaching is resisted when a person scorns or neglects the Word, or hears with carnal affection.

VII. Common grace is resisted. When men resist the knowledge and assent to truth, this blocks conversion.

VIII. Special grace is never resisted by the elect. Even though at times they resist, they are eventually overcome by divine power and drawn in.

IX. The reprobate resist even this divine illumination, especially those who commit the sin against the Holy Spirit.

X. There is, however, a singular grace by which the intellect is powerfully and effectually disposed, moved, and illuminated by God. It is accompanied by promises in the Gospel. The will is raised above its natural state and drawn to God, so that it now sees the good clearly, and is no longer able to persist in rejecting it.

XI. Furthermore, this grace is given only to the elect, though in individuals it is measured out and distinguished according to divine determination and various degrees. For God teaches and draws some more intensely by grace, others less so, and some He leaves in just condemnation for their unbelief or obstinate rejection. The flesh is more cunning and fierce in some, and more sluggish in others. The Spirit of God calls men under whose command and direction they are truly called. This grace regenerates, renews, and raises up the will; it conquers resistance and makes the unwilling willing.

XII. So we see that God does not act in the same way toward all men: some are able to resist grace, others are not able, even if they wished; some are able by nature, others are neither able nor willing.

XIII. This third mode destroys the will entirely rather than perfecting it, and utterly destroys and overturns its nature.

We reject as heretical the following statements:

I. That there never were spiritual gifts in the will of unfallen man.

II. That fallen man, without supernatural light, is capable of the things that are of the Spirit of God.

III. That the light of nature is the first grace, and is to be called the cause of true conversion.

IV. That nature as created by God and the grace of the Redeemer are the same.

V. That by nature men can perform saving good works and promote their own salvation.

VI. That the grace of conversion which is suitable to man becomes efficacious from man's disposition, and its ineffectiveness depends on that same disposition.

VII. That the grace of God is equal toward all men.

VIII. That man can distinguish himself so as to be glorified before God.

IX. That grace does not incline and determine our will toward the good.

X. That the action by which we are converted is only moral persuasion, and not truly a supernatural act proceeding from the omnipotence of God and exercising influence upon both our intellect and our will.

XI. That there is only an awakening and assisting grace to which we freely give assent, not a grace that truly corrects the intellect and will.

XII. That conversion requires a power which does not exceed all created power by many degrees, and that this power is only the promise of eternal life.

XIII. That the virtue by which man is converted is only a weak ability, which does not bring about sincere willingness and constancy in faith.

XIV. That faith is not produced by the death of Christ or by the promise of the New Covenant, but only arises from human effort in fulfilling its conditions.

XV. That there is no efficacy in divine illumination.

XVI. That faith is not a firm quality or power to believe, but only an inclination by which we are inclined to the Word of God, and that in this sense it is rightly called a *habitus*.

XVII. That temporary and saving faith cannot be clearly distinguished.

XVIII. That true justifying faith is not a sign of election.

XIX. That a man who has been healed in mind and will cannot abuse the divine gifts he has received.

XX. That a man who is converted cannot do more good than he does.

The Bremen Judgment

On the Fifth Article of the Remonstrants:

On the Perseverance of the Saints

Controversial Question:

Whether those who have been truly regenerated can entirely fall away from the Holy Spirit and strip themselves of all heavenly goods.

I. When we speak of the perseverance of the saints, we mean by “saints” all the faithful and truly regenerate—those whom God by His Word and Spirit has effectually called, gifted with saving faith, hope, and charity, and joined to Christ. Their perseverance consists in constancy and stability, which those who remain in Christ receive from God, springing from regeneration, and flowing from union with the Son. According to their measure and degree, they live in obedience and increase in grace. But they do not wholly fall away. To those who say: “Those who once had true faith and are saved may fall away and perish,” we say: By God’s grace, they persevere and are saved.

II. As creatures, we are naturally mutable, and without divine preservation would fall back into nothingness. Therefore, even in grace, we would revert to corruption unless preserved by the power of Christ. The regenerate are made new creatures and cannot fall away into the state of unregeneracy or perish like the rest of mankind.

III. The Scripture testifies to the perseverance of the saints, and God has promised rewards to those who persevere. See Leviticus 26, 2 Corinthians 6, John 15:7, 10, 12, Matthew 10:22, 24:13. And their perseverance is grounded on God's election (Romans 8:31), God's sustaining power (Philippians 4:13), and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

IV. Therefore, it is true that they cannot be seduced into final perdition (Matthew 24:24, John 10:28–29).

V. Hence, those who are reborn certainly persevere and attain eternal life (Romans 8:30, 35, John 10:17, 28).

VI. This perseverance depends not on human merit but on the immutability of God's divine decree and the efficacy of His gracious calling.

VII. And this redounds to the glory of our Redeemer, who does not just begin but also finishes His saving work in the elect.

VIII. Without this benefit, we would be no better off than Adam under the first covenant—able to fall from righteousness and lose salvation. But in Christ, we have received immutable righteousness and grace. Though we will and do, what we will and do comes from God's sustaining grace.

IX. The regenerate still struggle with much sin and weakness. Though the Spirit stirs them to fight, they are often overtaken by the desires of the flesh (Romans 7:19, 22–24, Genesis 19:30, 2 Samuel 12:9, Matthew 26:30, Galatians 2:14).

X. These sins offend God and would render them subject to eternal punishment—unless repented of and pardoned by Christ's righteousness. The regenerate need frequent repentance and God's mercy.

XI. When the regenerate offend God, they suffer affliction, fear, and distress. Yet, through God's grace, the Spirit revives their conscience, renews their hearts, and stirs repentance through the Word. The Holy Spirit is never wholly removed.

XII. Thus, the regenerate never fall so far as to utterly forsake God, hate Him, or align with Satan, being filled with malice and becoming enemies of God again. No example of such complete apostasy can be brought from Scripture.

XIII. Therefore, we conclude that none totally fall from the grace and favor of God. Though He may be angry and chastise them, He still calls them His children (2 Samuel 7:14, Psalm 89:33–35).

XIV. A chief abuse of this doctrine is twofold: that some live carelessly and presume upon grace; and that others, troubled by their weakness, fall into despair.

XV. Let us always remember that God gives His grace to make us holy. We should attend to the means of grace: Scripture, baptism, the Lord's Supper, prayer, sober life, and spiritual meditation—lest we offend as those who trample on God's mercy.

XVI. Let us also flee back to the mercy of God when we fall, remembering the great price of Christ's death, and willingly receiving correction and admonition.

XVII. This doctrine, rightly believed and used, affirms the fullness and constancy of God's grace. It rebukes the security of the flesh and comforts the sons of God. It teaches us to imitate the image of God's Son, as His members joined to their Head.

