

# APPENDIX A



The fact that Johann Huber was an enthusiastic correspondent is evident from the many letters cited that emerged from his pen. His syntax and orthography are imperfect in many instances, but his use of the old German alphabet (called *Kurrent* in Austria) is consistent. His propensity for leaving out words, and thus producing incomplete sentences, is likely more a result of the emotion with which he wrote the letters than any lack of linguistic competence. Huber's spelling variations might be blamed on the education he received nearly forty years before Germany, Austria, and Switzerland entered into a cooperative linguistic convention in 1905.

The following letter is provided as an example of Johann Huber's correspondence.<sup>1</sup> The translation yields no fewer than 1,643 words and includes the classic elements of this farmer's letters from 1899 to 1910, such as a complaint about the treatment he was receiving, a defense of his position, an attack on his accusers, references to the doctrines of the New Testament, reminders

of his good status as a citizen of Austria, and an appeal for a cessation of the persecution.

15 May 1903

Honorable Imperial and Royal County Office in Ried

I the undersigned must inform you that you have been misinformed. The statement issued by the town school board in Rottenbach that I didn't send my son Johann to church services five times in the month of January is a bold-faced lie! The man who attempts to make such a claim should also go to church in the afternoon when he would have seen him. So I must ask whether it's law that one must go to church. Nobody can quote me such a law especially at this time of year. Just ask around Haag. I know for a fact that the government officials keep their children at home. And to school confessions as argued recently. One Imperial and Royal attorney says that the children must have their sleep and he's right. Their bodies have to have enough time to recover. It would be very sad if one sent the children as slaves. The Catholics write the commandments with "thou shalt." How can a priest tell the government "thou must"? You make your own judgment!

I stick to the statements made on March 12 and May 4 by me and my wife Theresia Huber to the Imperial and Royal Court in Haag. Those two reports make it quite clear that school attendance must be consistent and I haven't failed to observe that. The rest is false. I refused to sign the document because no parish seal was affixed (and I'm not guilty of the charge). Anybody could have sent that report. Second, the entire matter must be reported to the police. Third, I made my statement on an attached half-page but the town school board probably didn't attach that. And I must emphasize the fact that [Vicar] Ignaz Erker has been an expressed enemy of mine for ten years and he makes his hatred quite clear because I made an endowment for the poor that will pay interest for twenty years from the estate of my father-in-law. That's why he's trying to get people stirred up against me. And there are people who will confirm that he's been trying to split us up, me and my

wife, because we're just living a peaceful life. He's just hiding behind the mantle of the priest. The records are proof of that. And it would be nice if the member of the school board could read and write well. Then he would know for what purpose he was elected. He wouldn't have to believe the statements of other people.

And I told the pastor in my own home back on December 17, 1901 what I discovered about the mismanagement of the poor fund for nearly [11] years. Since then there have been numerous pay-outs. What happened to the money before that? The church and the government could have worked together on that like they were supposed to do. In the second chapter of Romans Paul wrote that thou shalt not steal and you are the ones who are stealing!

I wrote a letter to the school principal about this on February 19, 1903 and exposed his terrible deceit that he attempted against my son in the presence of other pupils regarding confession visits. If he doesn't attend confession, he'll get a whipping and a bad report card. My son asked me to warn the principal that he wouldn't attend school any more until the matter is corrected. I finally convinced him to go again. I warned the principal in a letter to not allow such practices and challenged him to prove that confession was taught and practiced by Christ or his apostles. If he could do so, I would give him and the priest 1,000 Florins each. But the two offered neither proof nor an answer. So who owes whom an answer regarding my lack of support of the confession in February described in that report? I believe that my response is already enough. The confession was not introduced until 1215. It was terrible last year when they took my son to confession! The priest began to swear, saying that his parents were all damned and should be burned. The boy came home discouraged and half crazy. That's against the fourth commandment. This boy received a great sign when he was ill in 1900. The doctors had given up, so an elder of the Church of Jesus Christ laid his hands upon the boy's head and prayed and one-half hour later the circulation in his intestines and throughout his body began to work and he was on

his feet again. The one is the living God, the other a dead God that seeks only riches. I'm speaking from the experience I had personally with confession, of things I didn't know previously about such immorality in theology that's preached there. And that's recognized by the state? Dr. Martin Luther totally rejected confession and offerings. He introduced spiritual and physical freedom. We don't see immoral acts with school girls like the ones perpetrated by Catholic priests. The reports provide proof that offerings were introduced in AD 349. Christ instituted the sacrament. That's no breakfast. Paul wrote (Colossians 2:21–23) that we're not to touch things that give only the appearance of wisdom. In a worship service held for its own popularity—in which the body is hardened and no humility developed, it wouldn't even be enough to satisfy the flesh. And if they do it for gain only, that's no better than heathen worship!

We never read about confession, namely that they long to hear the sins. In another text we read, come hither with thy gold and silver and your sins shall be forgiven. For this purpose were all of the blessings and ceremonies introduced as well as all of the secret acts. As often as man has rejected the true and living God and has worshipped graven images, the days of such nations have been numbered. The kingdom of unrighteousness has gained the upper hand! The year 1484 was a terrible time when Pope Innocent VIII issued to Maximilian I a law that the farmers in [the Austrian province of] Styria be drawn and quartered and hung from trees as a mockery. One can hardly wonder how such high-ranking princes can be misled. Today there's almost the same mockery for those who don't obey their doctrines and different ways to persecute them. People like me could have been burned at the stake long ago under those circumstances if Martin Luther hadn't emerged in 1517 to put an end to those sickening practices and indulgences. Even when he knew that he was under the papal ban, but nobody dared to murder him. So kings and rulers were happy that physical and spiritual freedom had survived. Then along came Emperor Josef II who worked out a state constitution that is still in force today—freedom of religion. The

commandments read thou shalt! And Luther's doctrines are recognized by the state as is the Bible. The [population of the] world is free to introduce new religions as it sees fit and to be responsible for them. We read that the world will be judged according to their works. But they don't have the right to limit people spiritually and it's not their right to politically give one religion an advantage over another one, causing contention, conflict, and disharmony that we see in the world. During confession on April 4, the pastor in Rottenbach asked my servant girl named Mössender where she worked. When he heard on Michlmayr's farm, he instructed her to quit her job immediately. That very day she gave notice that she was quitting in fourteen days. So where is the peace, love, loyalty toward one's neighbor? Isn't this an offense against laws governing the employment of servants? Are the clerics really allowed to do all manner of evil? Don't they have to obey any laws? Aren't I a taxpayer? Don't I have the protection of the civil codes? Isn't it the job of the government officials to protect me and to punish the slanderers? One prophecy is really being fulfilled: when they write that in the year 1900 German loyalty and honesty were buried. You won't be able to find hardly any justice. The letter that arrived today on May 15 from the County Court in Haag reads that if I want to keep the son mentioned above from attending confession, the government will take away my parental rights. If they can do that, then they can also provide care, food, housing and an inheritance, that's what they can do. Why did they conduct an investigation on April 14 among my neighbors to find out if I'm insane? Paul the apostle and even Christ were declared insane. And they say that my children are neglected when it comes to religion. What is religion? Morality and decency, that's the best religion. The servant is just like his master.

I think that our times are not yet like it was in 1626 when Austria was made Catholic by the sword. Look at Spain, a totally Catholic country, how they are embroiled in revolution right now—demanding freedom. That's what's happening all over right now bit by bit. You can hear the call in every land: repent and be baptized in the name of Christ for the

✠ AGAINST THE WALL

forgiveness of sins. Then the end shall come to the world as it is now. The kingdom of God will flourish in the heavens, crowned in righteousness and welcomed by every nation on the earth!

So I make this request:

Don't deal with this matter lightly. Our great God is still alive!  
He's no respecter of persons, but recognizes only justice!

Johann Huber  
Michlmayr in Rottenbach  
May 15, 1903

15/11 1793

Wohlbeliebten H. H. Langjohann zu Ehrenpfund  
Klein

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VII

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