

Wolfgang Wulffer, Against the Unholy Rebellion of Martin Luder

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Introduction

A native of Schneeberg, Saxony, Wolfgang Wulffer entered the University of Leipzig in 1491.¹ Though listed as an assistant priest in Dresden in 1508, he seems to have lived in Leipzig, likely receiving an income from the Dresden church *in absentia* (a common practice of the time). He moved to Dresden in 1513 to serve as a town clerk, and local records indicate that he helped modernize bookkeeping methods there.

Beginning in 1519, Wulffer worked in the residential chapel of Duke George of Saxony. After hosting the Leipzig Disputation between Martin Luther and Johann Eck in 1519, Duke George became a lifelong defender of the Roman church. With his support, theologians in Albertine Saxony such as Jerome Emser vigorously opposed Luther and the Lutheran Reformation. Wulffer's first tract against Luther was published at the beginning of 1522. In it he refuted Luther's concept of the "common priesthood," which Luther had developed in *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate* (1520).

Later in 1522, Wulffer published a second tract, *Against the Unholy Rebellion of Martin Luder*.² It provided his response to *A Sincere Admonition by Martin Luther to All Christians to Guard against Insurrection and Rebellion* (1522), in which Luther had warned against the violent implementation of Reformation ideas.³ Wulffer claimed that Luther was indeed guilty of fomenting insurrection, despite Luther's appeals to peaceful protest. His text therefore provides a

¹ Biographical information is found in "Wulfer, Wolfgang," *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot, 1898) 24:269. Additional information about Wulffer appears in WA 8:245–46. Alternate spellings of Wulffer include Wulfer and Wolfer.

² Wolfgang Wulffer, *Wid[er] die unselige auffrure Merten Luders* (Leipzig: [Martin Landsberg], 1522).

³ WA 8:676–87; LW 45:57–74.

skeptical Catholic perspective on Luther's early attempts to balance strong evangelical preaching with respect for political institutions and social harmony. Because this tract so closely follows the logic and language of Luther's piece, readers will benefit from reading or reviewing *A Sincere Admonition*.

Wulffer used biblical citations, arguments for the social good, and appeals to tradition to undermine Luther's views and reforms. While willing to express some critiques of the papacy, he generally identified apostles, popes, bishops, and teachers of the Roman church as reliable bearers of the gospel across the centuries. In contrast to such continuity, Wulffer viewed Luther as a radical who would rather tear down the church than tolerate imperfections within it. He also rejected Luther's claim that an individual could speak for God or interpret the faith over against the institutional church, as if the church did not have divine sanction or spiritual understanding in matters of self-governance.

Frequently borrowing Luther's language of "Christ alone" and "faith alone" throughout the tract, Wulffer applied such evangelical phrases to the teaching and preaching of the traditional church. With other early critics of Luther, Wulffer noted that the reformer's emphasis on right faith seemed to have come at the expense of Christian love; it is, however, hard to imagine a situation in which Luther could have demonstrated the right quality or quantity of love to satisfy his adversaries. He also accused Luther of extreme subjectivity in biblical interpretation. For his part, Luther had consistently tried to address the critique of subjectivity by pointing to both scripture and tradition for his positions, though such arguments failed to convince traditional Catholics who viewed him as more willful than faithful.

In the early years of the Reformation, Luther's rhetoric against the papal church escalated in proportion to the hierarchy's rejection of his reforms. As a work of the early 1520s, therefore,

Luther's *A Sincere Admonition* uses heightened language to describe the social confusion, end-times judgment, and work of the antichrist that the reformer saw around him. Even so, Wulffer's response still managed occasionally to overstate Luther's words, providing a good example of the rhetorical impasse that had already arisen between the traditional and reforming parties of the time.

Like Luther, Wulffer was concerned about the Reformation's effects on the "common people," whom he personified as *Herr Omnes* and *Karsthans* (see notes below). Wulffer believed that Luther was guilty of leading the general populace into spiritual error, social upheaval, and violence against priests and monastics. At the same time, his arguments here and in the earlier tract against Luther's "common priesthood" suggest a traditional, limited role for lay people in spiritual life.

Throughout the tract, Wulffer refers to Luther as "Luder." In his earlier tract of 1522, Wulffer used both "Luther" and "Luder" when referring to the reformer. Indeed, "Luder" was the original spelling of Luther's family name. At the same time, the German word "Luder" also carried a negative meaning, as it could refer to a scoundrel or a person of bad morals.⁴ Whether Wulffer meant to invoke this meaning or not, his use of "Luder" is retained here because of its consistent use in the text.

Overall, this tract provides a glimpse into the conflicts of the early Reformation. While theological and spiritual divisions were certainly central to these debates, these participants also embodied the diverging religious policies of Ernestine (electoral) Saxony—where Luther lived and worked—and Wulffer's native Albertine (ducal) Saxony. Though addressed to the people of Wittenberg, the tract does not seem to have received much attention outside of Albertine Saxony;

⁴ Thomas Kaufmann, *A Short Life of Martin Luther* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 2016), 1. See also, "Luder," in Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1885) 6:1231–34; also available online: <http://dwb.uni-trier.de/de/>.

no records show that it was printed again in the sixteenth century after its original publication in Leipzig. For that reason, it likely functioned more to strengthen the views of people in Wulffer's home territory than to sway the minds of those in favor of the Reformation. In any case, it raised strong objections to Luther's early Reformation agenda and stands as a valuable witness to the commitments and conflicts of the period.

Translation

Peace and blessing to you in Wittenberg who live in the fear of God.

Dearest brothers, at the turn of the blessed new year, we sent you a work of Christ Jesus, our God and Lord, as the Father gave him to us for the salvation of humankind from eternal death.⁵ In him alone is our salvation. In him alone do we find all peace and truth, overflowing with the treasure of all grace, so that through faith we are armed to resist all rebellions, revolts, and false deceits of the harmful prophets who treat our holy gospel wrongly and treacherously. This leads them to ruin and us to salvation and holiness, for we partially agree with Martin Luder's teaching from the word of Peter: "You are a royal priesthood."⁶ We should not sacrilegiously boast that we are all truly priests—as Luder falsely interprets—when he says that because we are all equally baptized, therefore all baptized Christians come out of the water as true priests. This is unchristian. Even worse is the deceptive, harmful, and unfaithful advice he has written to all of us—yet which crawls especially into the ears of the unlearned simple folk—that says they should indeed boast, because they all speak with the true mouth of the Spirit of God.⁷ This is how Luder and others try to create a holy rebellion.⁸ But they do not say how all are priests, even though not everyone has been commanded to live and work in this Christian office. Neither do they say how everyone supposedly speaks with the mouth of the Spirit of God, when such power has not been given. Yet such is the unholy work that Luder spreads.

⁵ This paragraph refers to Wulffer's tract from earlier in the same year, *Wid[er] de[n] ketzrischen widerspruch, Merten Lutters, vff den spruch Petri, Jr seyt eyn koniglich pristerthumb* (Leipzig: [Landsberg, Martin], 1522).

⁶ Luther had commented on the meaning of 1 Pet 2:9 in works such as *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation* (1520), earning rebukes from writers such as Jerome Emser and Wulffer.

⁷ Speaking with the "mouth of Christ" is a major theme in Luther's 1522 tract, *A Sincere Admonition by Martin Luther to All Christians to Guard against Insurrection and Rebellion*, WA 8:676–87; LW 45:57–74.

⁸ Wulffer uses the phrase "*ein selig auffrure*" [*sic*] as an equivalent to Luther's "*geistlich auffuhr*" [*sic*], WA 8:683 and LW 45:68. LW translates "*geistlich auffruhr*" as "spiritual insurrection," in contrast to armed insurrection. This translation, however, will follow Wulffer's consistent use of the word *selig* by referring to "holy rebellion."

May God preserve us all from Luder's wicked ideas, dear brothers in Christ Jesus. There are two kinds of harmful uprisings by bad people on earth: physical and spiritual, the death of the body and of the soul. Luder has written of both. The title and contents of this heretical little book [*A Sincere Admonition by Martin Luther to All Christians to Guard against Insurrection and Rebellion*] awaken these desires, even as it cloaks them. It is written against us Christian believers who are in religious estates, as it calls for help from the secular authorities and the mob.⁹ It falsely sets its evil will against the blessed light of Christian truth, which teaches all peace and unity. But Luder explains that we are not worthy of physical safety. Or, if we were worthy, it would certainly not come to us, because we do not want it.¹⁰ Luder is glad, however, to hear that we are afraid of human bloodlust.¹¹ But we who have been strengthened in grace are not afraid; we do not lie in faith's sickbed. We will be an unflinching and noble sacrifice to the Lord, should we ourselves become a pleasing aroma to Christ [2 Cor 2:14–16]. For no one can separate the elect from the love of God; that is certain [Rom 8:33–39]. Therefore, we believe in the Lord and die with him, as he died for us, setting our souls alongside those of our brothers. Luder writes not one word of this in this rebellion of his, as we shall hear.

“The blessed light of Christian truth . . . has risen again”¹² among Christian believers. That is true, but not with the help of Luder's raving and writing, as he ignorantly says of himself.¹³ This past year of 1521 has brought Christian light to eyes other than Luder's. It has brought the holy rebellions that prosper the faithful, as shown to us in the rebellion of Cain against his brother Abel, Pharaoh against the children of God, the dangerous unholy ones in

⁹ Wulffer used the phrase “*er omnes*” [“*Herr Omnes*,” literally “Lord Everyone”] to describe popular opinion and mob behavior.

¹⁰ WA 8:679; LW 45:60–61.

¹¹ WA 8:676; LW 45:57.

¹² A loose citation of Luther's *A Sincere Admonition . . .*, WA 8:676; LW 45:57.

¹³ WA 8:684; LW 45:70.

contrast to their Messiah—our God and Lord Christ Jesus—along with all the Lord’s elect disciples. Scripture abundantly reveals the end of these rebellions, which are all the rebellions of devilish people, the same as Luder. As happened to all unfaithful people and as will happen at the Last Day, so will it go for all those who thirst for the blood of God’s children in this Lutheran rebellion, which strikes the entire spiritual estate (with or without a sword) in body and soul, word and deed. This judgment fell upon Cain and Lamech in Genesis 4 and applies to all murderers [Gen 4:12 and 23]. And everyone who hates their brother is a murderer (1 John 3[:15]). This blessed Christian light will not be hidden under the bushel basket (Matt 5[:15]).

The holy sacred scriptures that describe the Last Day and the severe judgment of the Lord, which Luder pieced together to clothe his nonsense, are just as much against Luder as against the pope. The even more unspeakably heavy words of the prophets—for instance, Amos 5; Joel 2; and Zephaniah 1—threaten all Christian believers together with the wrath of God and the day of judgment, as the painters illustrate.¹⁴ All the godless and the antichrists will be smashed not with the hand but rather with the mouth of the Spirit of God, just as dust is blown away by the wind and brought to nothing. hellfire awaits such antichrists, just as heavy lead is consumed by a hot oven [Jer 6:29 and Ezek 22:18–22]. For judgment has fallen, from which Luder will not escape any more than he can evade God’s severity. It is entirely true that those who believe this will not be judged with this wrath, for they will sit with the Lord in judgment, while those who do not believe will not stand before such judgment, for the judgment has already come [John 3:18]. But all must be judged, whether pope or Luder, living or dead, because they have loved rebellion and darkness more than the light (John 3[:19]). Their faith will

¹⁴ A reference to Luther’s own words about artwork portraying the Last Judgment; WA 8:677; LW 45:59, including note 6. Amos 5:18–20; Joel 2:1–11; and Zeph 1:2–18.

not help them, as Luder writes, for even if they suffer great injury to body, goods, and soul, they will not be redeemed.

A damnable rebellion has recently started on earth. It refuses to end among the evil children of Belial [2 Cor 6:15, et al]. There is no peace for them, as the prophet says [Isa 48:22], only strife. They drive out the flock of God, the love of neighbor, and peace; they drive in the devil's rebellion and discord. Their hellish pain will increase, even as the heavenly honor and glory of God's elect children increases. And yet, these poisonous tongues think to themselves that God wants to give them a big, comfortable reward, as described in John 16 about those in the world who outwardly have the form of righteousness but inwardly are ravenous wolves in sheep's clothing [John 16:2–3 and Matt 7:15]. They come to judge and condemn your brothers, tempting the mob to do the same. But in your synagogue is Christ alone. He is not here in Luder's rebellion. When you read his work carefully you will find such rebellion disguised under the form of friendliness, loveliness, and sweetness; you will find the old serpent transformed into an angel of light. Because of the Christian truth that we know so well (2 Cor 2[:11]), we should not be surprised that the devil's apostle will see himself as a good servant who will seduce us away from goodness by speaking with the mouth of God's Spirit: "Their rewards will match their deeds" (2 Cor 11[:15]).

In his letter of warning, Luder finds no scripture more useful than this one in which he seductively boasts: "Follow me! Follow me! I am the true mouth of the Spirit of God, and so all of you must boast in this, too, if you want to destroy the pope and the entire papal regime." This is all devilish and unchristian, as holy St. Paul admonishes us in many places in his epistles, saying, "Dear brothers, imitate me, just as I imitate Christ Jesus," [1 Cor 11:1] not like Luder's "follow me, follow me!" The gospel of Matthew, chapter 13[:29-30], forbids tearing out the

weeds whose roots are mixed with the Lord's wheat, so that we do not thereby destroy the good wheat. Instead, we should let the weeds grow until the harvest is ready, at which time God's angels will do the harvesting, not Luder and his friends. But our dear Luder wants to tear out the weeds through his own efforts before the proper time. Too high, Luder! The stone you have lifted to throw has fallen on your own head. You have dug the grave that you yourself will fall into (Ps 7[:15-16 and Sir 27:25–26]) and you will be captured by the snare that you have laid.

Luder blasphemes God and the holy mouth of God's Spirit. We will now prove this. Luder teaches in this unholy rebellion nothing except that these new Christians, who boast in themselves with the name of Christian, should speak the way Luder speaks: "My mouth is God's mouth, my teaching is God's teaching, my gospel is God's gospel (not mine), so that it can truly do its work of destroying the entire papal regime," etc.¹⁵ This human fabrication by Luder woefully misleads these new Christians, so that they turn into antichristians. Dear Luder, why should not the traditional Christians also boast in themselves, saying, "My mouth is God's mouth, my gospel is God's gospel, not mine but rather his who sent me." [John 7:16] Please tell us the difference, so that it alone will receive glory. On the Last Day—which Luder wrongfully and heretically teaches about—the old papists and the new Lutherans ought to boast, because they are all Christians. This is said by all in the great houses of the Lord, the holy Christian church, which alone believes the gospel and preaches Christ, all with the mouth of God and the help of God's Spirit. This Holy Spirit and mouth of God need not tolerate Luder's blasphemies, because it is eternally almighty and glorified in peace. The Lord will use this rebellion for the building up, not the tearing down, of the holy Christian church. The Holy Spirit shows itself where it wants, when it wants, and if it wants (John 3[:8]) against the desires of Luder and all heretics, as it says in 1 Corinthians 14 and 2 Pet 1[:20-21].

¹⁵ Wulffer again paraphrases Luther's *A Sincere Admonition . . .*, WA 8:683; LW 45:67–68.

Dear brothers, let all with ears to hear listen [Matt 11:15]. Chapter 9 of holy St. Paul's epistle to the Romans describes the "holy rebellion" of the Lord. Luder clothes himself in this passage, as if we do not know Paul and his desire to become "accursed and cut off" for the sake of the Jews, his brothers according to the flesh.¹⁶ Similarly, the holy prophet Moses would have been erased from the book of life, if only to drive the Jews from the law so that our holy Christian faith might enter into their hardened hearts [Rom 9:16–10:4]. God wants to have mercy on them. Such mercy does not only exist concerning the hard-headedness of the Jews alone. For how much more of a "holy rebellion" from the beginning of the world has there been through all patriarchs, all prophets, the Lord Christ Jesus himself in his human nature (Bar 3[:5-8]), all apostles, martyrs, popes, bishops, cardinals, priests, and monks, along with all the doctors of the Christian church. Yet Luder identifies all of these with the swarming vermin of the papal regime.¹⁷ Up to today, all of these people have taught this holy work, that faith alone is holy. This, however, comes from God's will and inscrutable counsel (Rom 9–11), in which God wants all to be holy, for God does not desire the death of sinners (Ezek 33[:15-16]). One can plainly see that everyone has been spreading this message for well over a thousand years. Yet our Luder thinks he can accomplish far more—overturning the entire papacy—in three years.¹⁸ No, no. Luder will not change anything as long as he is no proper son of God, born of the Father. Even if Luder had a thousand bodies to give to the fires of hell, nevertheless, he would still not separate one pious papist from the heart of a pious Christian.¹⁹

¹⁶ Wulffer returns to Luther's theme of "holy rebellion" or "spiritual insurrection" (in contrast to armed rebellion). However, Wulffer incorrectly connects Luther's work with Rom 9:3–5 at this point.

¹⁷ Wulffer over-paraphrases a list that Luther used to describe the papal church, WA 8:683, LW 45:68.

¹⁸ In *A Sincere Admonition . . .*, Luther described how much dramatic activity had taken place through his preaching in a single year and imagined what might happen in two more; WA 8:684; LW 45:68–69.

¹⁹ A reference to *A Sincere Admonition . . .*, WA 8:677; LW 45:59, "If I had ten bodies and could acquire so much favor with God that he would chasten them with the gentle lash of bodily death or insurrection, I would from the bottom of my heart most gladly offer them all in behalf of this wretched crew."

Yes, it is indeed true, that a holy Christian life stands in faith and love alone. St. James says in chapter 2[:18]: “Show me your faith apart from love.”²⁰ You pious St. Luder, we Christian believers say, “Show us your faith with your love, in your Christian faith and papal love.” One might be able to deceive a blind person, but the children of the light of Christian truth will clearly see that Luder’s faith without love is full of rebellion and blasphemy against God. This holy Christian faith of ours was taught to us in the holy gospel of Christ Jesus, through which we have come to recognize and believe our heavenly Father, his only-begotten Son, and the Holy Spirit. This faith, which called us in eternity, shows us that ungodly human rebellion and damnable misbelief can appear under the pleasing form of a Christian faith.

Karsthans²¹ is much smarter than Luder. This is because Karsthans doesn’t laud his own proud faith. He also does not make himself a true mouth of God’s spirit, saying that his teaching is not his own but rather is the teaching that his father gave him, as Luther and his father say. Even so, Karsthans threatens to beat us into a heap using spears and clubs. Dear Karsthans, go beat up an untouched field. Otherwise you might meet Luder and the pope, which will grieve no one more than yourself. On this point, though, Karsthans has grown unreasonable, thinking to be effective by using both his aggression and the books of God. But this would be wrong, because might does not make right.²² And just as much as Karsthans’ bundle of straw can help the sun to shine at midday (which is impossible), so much will Luder do the Lord’s work through his holy commotion, which he thinks he will accomplish in three years. They are both nothing: Karsthans is nothing, Luther is nothing. Karsthans and Luther are one thing, but Christ Jesus alone is the true proper son of God and the promised Messiah, who drives out those empty speeches, enters

²⁰ Wulffer substitutes “love” for “works” in his citation of Jas 2:18.

²¹ Meaning “the man with a hoe,” Karsthans was a name given to personify the peasantry or commoners. It is similar to *Herr Omnes*, mentioned above. See LW 45:57, note 1.

²² Wulffer invokes a proverb: “*Wer schlecht [schlägt], der ist unrecht.*”

into the hearts of God-fearing children, and gives power to become children of God to all who believe in him [John 1:12].

Luder has no Christian faith and, therefore, no Christian love. If Luder had all the faith that we supposedly do not have, then he would still have far less Christian love than anyone else. That should accuse him in his own conscience. With his writing and raving, Luder has turned Christian faith and Christian love, being damned and being blessed, upside down, and much more besides. This is another form of rebellion that Luder would not escape, should we all act like he does without any kind of brotherly or Christian love. Both of the following things, however, are blessed: to ignore human rebellion and to do penance for our sinful life. For it is always true that Christ Jesus alone, the proper son of God in heaven and on earth, was given the power to kill and make alive, to cut down and to save, to cast into hell and to raise up again, to put belief in his holy faith into humans hearts and to drive all sins out [1 Sam 2:6]. In Christ Jesus alone is it commanded that we believe, keep his divine law, and pray for his truly holy rebellion. Through these things, one recognizes the children of God from among the children of the devil.

With our impure mouths, we want to spread the pleasing aroma of the Lord, though we are all impure sinners. Unfortunately, all our ignorance, blindness, falsehood, hypocrisy, lying, cheating, pride, blasphemy, adultery, murder, foolishness, gluttony, knavery, greed, and many other unholy sins, shames, and vices—in short, all evil—has been revealed and uncovered to the Jews, heathens, and the entire world. It is getting inexplicably out of hand, how all flesh wanders in darkness in these last evil days. If all this is true, as many are prophesying,²³ why should we pay attention to one evil among many and start a rebellion over it, storing God's wrath for

²³ Prophetic literature predicting the great sinfulness of the nearing end times had been common since the end of the fifteenth century.

ourselves (Rom 2[:4-5]) and rejoicing that we who are nothing truly are the mouth of the Spirit of God? Dear brothers, what kind of bargain can we make between God and the devil, between light and darkness, between the mouth of God and the mouth of the devil? So it is with the mouth of sinners, which we all are without exception. No one—including you, Luder—speaks with the mouth of God. You may not want to be a papist. Nevertheless, even if you prize your innocence, it will not justify you (1 Cor 4[:4-5]).²⁴ If you are without sin, then throw the first stone at the pope (John 8[:7]). Scripture testifies when it says that if we think we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and whoever is guilty of one sin is guilty of all of them (Jas 2[:10]).²⁵

Now, dear brothers, although Luder is not without sin before the terrifying, angry face of God, he nevertheless pushes his gospel, certain that he is a mouth of God's Spirit. Boasting before the entire world, he is confident that he has done more to dismantle the papacy with his godly mouth than any emperor, king, or duke has ever done with the sword.²⁶ None of this will help Luder, when he inevitably stands in judgment, as said above. Whether he wants it or not, the reward of his guilt will be his. How we hope that you all stay in Wittenberg, because nothing will be forgiven concerning this holy man! In Acts 10[:34], Rom 2[:11], and Jas 2[1:9], the scriptures tell us that God is no respecter of persons. Everyone has to take their part in the dance, getting the partner they deserve. As we sow here on earth, so shall we reap, whether in the flesh or in the spirit, as Gal 6[:7-8] says. The Lord's providence remains inscrutable.

Oh, what a damnable rebellion Luder's rebellion is in contrast to the holy rebellion of the Lord. The Lord's rebellion compares to Luder's rebellion just as you can tell the difference

²⁴ In *A Sincere Admonition* . . . , Luther had already complained that his opponents expected perfection from him and his colleagues: "We are not supposed to reproach them with the fact that among them there is hardly anything good; but if even a single one of us is not wholly spiritual and a perfect angel, our entire cause is supposed to be wrong." WA 8:681; LW 45:65.

²⁵ Loosely paraphrasing 1 John 1:8 and Jas 2:10.

²⁶ WA 8:683; LW 45:67.

between Christ Jesus and his adversary, Satan. For the Lord's rebellion is not Luder's rebellion any more than God's mouth is Luder's mouth. St. Paul saw things that would not be proper to describe (2 Cor 12[:2-4]). Such improper and unchristian things to say include the notion that Luder's mouth is Christ's mouth. It is even less proper to write that all Lutheran mouths are mouths of Christ or that the entire body of Christ is an idle mouth with no head, no eyes, no ears, or feet. Compared to St. Paul's teaching, Luder's teaching is an idle mouth (1 Cor 12[:12-26] and Eph 4[:16]).

As you read in Luder's heretical little book, Peter and Paul, pope, bishop, cardinal, monks, nuns, and Christians of all secular estates should be equally supplanted by the proud boasting and holy heretical rebellion of the heretic Luder, who applies all godly honor to himself. With beautiful evangelical words he presses onward, saying: "Now everyone—whether it be I or another—who speaks the word of Christ may boldly assert that their mouth is the mouth of Christ. I for my part am certain that my word is not mine, but the word of Christ; my mouth, therefore, must also be the mouth of him whose word it speaks."²⁷ Matthew 24[:4-5, 23-24] describes this boasting of the Christian antichrist, who would say: "Here is Christ, my mouth is Christ, my speech is Christ, my work is Christ." But when the Lord comes and judges, they will not want to boast in themselves anymore, saying: "I am not your mouth; I have not spoken your word; I have not done great miracles in your name. Such works would not have been possible, except through the mouth of your spirit" (Matt 7[:22] and Luke 13[:26]). It is truly a different kind of person who says: "I do not want to know Luder. He wants to play his game for two years. And if after two years Luder has turned the swarming vermin of the papal regime to dust and gone up to heaven to bring his Father's kingdom, I still will not thank him." As if we should be thankful for the destruction of the holy papacy. Such a destroyer sits on the seat of pestilence.

²⁷ WA 8:683; LW 45:67.

Such idols are the devil's accomplices. For even if an angel from heaven were sent to us to preach a gospel other than that which St. Peter, Paul, pope, bishop, cardinal, priest, monk, and all Christian doctrines have preached, we would not believe such a one (Gal 1[:8]). Believing Luder's mouth would be the same.

Storms, rumors, persecutions, and pains are what Luder and his friends can expect from the mouth of God, because he is the pickaxe and gentle lash of the Lord, through whom God is giving us a home, as a benevolent father does for his beloved children, if we do penance here on our journey (Heb 12[:6-7]). The kingdom of heaven and the day of the Lord are drawing near. Therefore, we should subdue our evil hidden will and let reason guide us, as is in our power (Gen 4[:7]; Isa 1[:16-20]; Sir 15[:11-20]). All of this is with the help and grace of God, without whom we could not confess Christ for our salvation (1 Cor 12[:3-6] and 2 Cor 2[:14-17]).

Therefore, Luder: uproot, push, and destroy. Call all your friends to the gates of hell so that they help you drive and destroy all human law from the hearts of Christian believers. Just take care, Luder, that you do not uproot God's law along with the rest. Drive out pope, bishop, cardinal, priest, monk, nun, and all the swarming vermin of the papal regime. But watch out that you do not drive out Jesus Christ's pope, bishop, cardinal, priest, monk, nun, and the entire swarming vermin of God's regime. For these same ones teach, preach, write, and share that our Christian life stands in faith and Christian love alone, just as all popes, bishops, cardinals, priests, and monks have preached from the beginning until now. Take care, Luder, that you do not uproot all faith and all Christian love. Do not take part in such alien sins. Your ideas may be good, but your judgments and verdicts betray you, just as the Jews' good ideas led to false verdicts (Rom 10[:2-3]). This is how all Christian heretics are deceived, when they agitate our holy Christian church with its promises and commands of Christ. Everything right and true has been promised

and commanded: the holy promise of eternal life and our keeping of the divine commands. This is true and right, as all elect children have been chosen; otherwise all would have been condemned to damnation. Everyone must confess that nothing happens unjustly, for God alone is the just judge, who does not treat anyone unjustly (Rom 2[:2-16]).

To drive home this severe judgment and wrath of God in order to drive out sins from those who are weak in faith—while letting the papal regime remain undisturbed by those who have perfect faith—is pleasing in the eyes of God, the angels in heaven, and the spirit of peace on earth. We should not pray with the sinful prayer, which Luder heretically and seductively teaches, that fire should fall from heaven and consume all papists and antichrists.²⁸ This is not the mouth of the Spirit of Christ (Matt 9) or of any children of Christ. Christ Jesus is the one who blesses (Matt 1[:21]), who came to bless and not to condemn. Members of his body should do the same, killing no one with their rebellions. They give all judgment to the Lord, for they love this divine love, which alone overcomes all things (1 Cor 13[:1-8, 13]) and comes from the same Spirit. It is unbelievable that all papists, of whom we write, are children of Belial. It is just as unbelievable that all Lutherans, of whom Luder writes, are all children of Christ. But this is true: that all children of God are children of Christ—not children of papists or of Lutherans—when they all pray to one God. No one but God alone can separate the sheep from the goats (Matt 25[:32]).

Nevertheless, all heretics dare to separate the evil ones from the good. They do this against our Christian light and truth, as we read in history even to our own times. Here the holy papal regime is often afflicted, tossed around, with enemies pressing themselves upon Peter's little boat, as can potentially happen according to the will of God. But it neither should nor must

²⁸ Wulffer paraphrases *A Sincere Admonition* . . . , WA 8:682; LW 45:66. “You should in all humility pray against the papal regime as Ps 10[:12–15] does”

crash upon the rocks, even if all devilish antichrists were to destroy and annihilate both the papal and Lutheran regimes. We see this in the example of the Jews, whose regime began to act wickedly against God our Lord, yet whom the mouth and Spirit of God has not destroyed, to this very day. Were there in fact among the Jews still an idolatrous, devilish antichrist and enemy of God, even such a Jewish antichristian regime should and must remain undestroyed by the mouth of Luder and his spirit, as St. Paul wrote to the Romans in chapter 11[:26-28]. For a remnant of the Jews remains blessed, whom the Lord keeps for himself and who have not bent the knee to the idol Baal. [Rom 11:4] This was written for the comfort of us Christian believers as much as for the Jews. Luder has no need to destroy the entire spiritual and papal regime, because a remnant of Christian believers will persevere, whom the Lord alone knows, at his final return. The flesh, too, of such believers will also be holy, as Paul writes. Therefore, let us not sleep, lest we be led into Luder's rebellion and into deep, endless blindness.

Deliver us, God, from this devilish blindness and from the evil will, nature, heart, rebellion, and revolt of Luder, his friends, and all evil ones. Lead us not into the temptations of the devilish spirit, who from the beginning has delighted in revealing all the world's sins, shames, and vices. Such a spirit wants your *gloria* for itself, so that God in heaven and all supernal heavenly courts are despised, defamed, dishonored, and slandered more and more among God's people on earth, and so that one member bites, gnaws, claws, and devours another, until they swallow each other alive, rushing headlong into hellfire (Gal 5[:13-15] and Ps 124[:3-5, Vg.; 125:3-5, EVV]). There this evil worm and rebellion will never die, and its hellfire will not be quenched (Isa 66[:24; also Mark 9:48]).²⁹ In that place is nothing but weeping and wailing and the gnashing of teeth, as the Lord warned many times in the gospel [e.g., Matt 8:12; Luke 13:28]. Luder's unholy rebellion teaches all these things. Who now wants to follow his advice

²⁹ Chapter of Isaiah citation is misprinted in the 1522 edition as "vlti."

and help him spread this message? The use of his sinful mouth and poisoned tongue works rebellion not only against pious Christians and beloved friends of God on earth but even more against God in heaven. Therefore, dearest brothers, let us and all who love and fear your God pray that—God willing—you might be safe from Luder’s rebellion and all human rebellions, taking our well-intentioned sincere brotherly admonition to heart.³⁰ Do not sacrilegiously boast in yourselves, saying that you are the mouth of God, when you speak, write, or preach such sin, shame, and vice to your brothers. Instead—in brotherly unity and in faith, hope, and true love—make your hearts ready for the Lord’s blessed coming. To this end, may the grace of God help us all. Let everyone say, “Amen.”

Printed in Leipzig in the year 1522.

³⁰ With the phrase “sincere admonition” [*getraw vormanung*], Wulffer plays on the title of Luther’s tract.