

Against the Wittenberg Idol Martin Luther

Introduction

Against the Wittenberg Idol Martin Luther (Wyder den Wittenbergischen Abgot Martin Luther) was published in a single edition in 1524 without indication of either publisher or place of publication, although it was likely printed in Dresden at a press under the control of Luther's opponent Hieronymous Emser.¹ It was one of several responses to Luther's *Against the New Idol and Old Devil, which shall be Translated in Meissen*. Luther's work itself was a reaction to the canonization of Blessed Benno of Meissen, a late eleventh and early twelfth-century bishop who had supported the papacy in the German Investiture Controversy. Duke George of Saxony had been agitating for the canonization of Bishop Benno since the end of the fifteenth century. That honor was granted to him on May 31, 1524 and June 16 was set as the date for the solemn translation of his bones, which were to be dug up with ceremonial gold and silver shovels and reburied in a marble sepulcher in the Meissen cathedral. Luther's response was certainly dictated in no small part by the roles played in the process by Duke George and his secretary Emser. Clearly, he was reacting to the plans for the translation of Benno's bones, which were widely publicized and obviously intended as a provocation to the reformers. Made aware of these plans by the beginning of May, Luther rushed to get his response into print before the

¹ Heribert Smolinsky, *Augustin von Alveldt und Hieronymous Emser: Eine Untersuchung zur Kontroverstheologie der frühen Reformationszeit im Herzogtum Sachsen*; Reformationsgeschichtliche Studien und Texte 122 (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1983), 425. Alveldt's pamphlet also exists in one modern critical edition: Augustin von Alfeld, OFM, *Wyder den Wittenbergischen Abgot Martin Luther*, ed. Käthe Büschgens; Corpus Catholicorum 11 (Münster: Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1926).

celebration in mid- June. We know that Emser had a copy of Luther's work by June 8, and so it must have been to the press by the beginning of that month.

Alveldt was not alone in his defense of the bishop's canonization; Emser chimed in as did the Cistercian Abbot of Alzelle, Paul Bachmann (Amnicola).² However, in important ways Alveldt stood out among Luther's opponents on this issue and others. He was one of the most prolific members of that group, writing in total seventeen works that responded directly or indirectly to criticisms and claims by the reformers. Many of these works were written in the vernacular in a popular style reminiscent of Luther's, which suggests that he shared the Wittenberg reformer's strategy of trying to reach the widest possible readership. He was the only preacher among the most prolific Catholic controversialists and the only one to publish sermons. Like Luther, in many of his pamphlets he based his arguments exclusively on Scripture.³

Alveldt was a likely candidate to be an important opponent of Luther. Named for his birthplace, Alveldt near Hildesheim, he was probably about the same age as Luther, although there is no direct evidence of his birth date. He was a member of the Saxon Province of the Holy Cross of the Observant branch of the Franciscan Order. We are unsure about when he joined the order, but in his first polemical work, *On the Apostolic See* (1520), he identified himself as the Lector of Holy Writ in its Leipzig priory. There is no evidence that he had a humanist training,

² Alfeld, *Wyder den Wittenbergischen Abgot*, 12-13; Smolinsky, *Alveldt und Emser*, 144, 289-93; *D. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1899), vol. 15, 170-73 [hereafter WA].

³ On Alveldt's place among Catholic controversialists during the early years of the Reformation, see David Bagchi, *Luther's Earliest Opponents: Catholic Controversialists, 1518-1525* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), especially 198, 206, 267.

but he was a fluent Latinist, conversant with Greek and Hebrew, and familiar with the ancient classics and a number of humanist writings. This knowledge, along with his practice of arguing from Scripture, derives from his background as lector. As the introduction to *Against the Wittenberg Idol Martin Luther* tells us, sometime in 1523 or 1524 he was elected guardian of the Franciscan priory in Halle, a position he held until 1528. Then in 1529 he was elected as provincial of the Saxon province. He held that position until 1532, and he likely died in 1535.⁴

Alveldt's involvement in Reformation polemics began in 1520 with his defense of papal authority, *On the Apostolic See*. This entrance into the fray was encouraged by Adolf von Anhalt, the bishop of Merseburg, and possibly by the papal legate Karl von Miltiz. The question of the extent and origins of papal authority had been raised at the Leipzig Disputation in July 1519, although there is no clear evidence that Alveldt attended this event. *On the Apostolic See* was in Luther's hands by early May 1520 and provoked a heated exchange between the reformers and the defenders of the old church, to which Alveldt contributed two more works: *A Poulitice, Newly Best Prepared* and *A Devout Collection*. However, Luther himself remained aloof from these polemics, until Alveldt contributed to the debate a vernacular reworking of *On the Apostolic See (A Very Fruitful and Useful Little Book)* with a more popular slant, to which he responded with *On the Papacy in Rome*. Alveldt responded in turn to this work with *A Sermon against Martin Luther*.⁵

⁴ Probably the best recent summary of Alveldt's life in German is contained in Smolinsky, *Alveldt und Emser*, 18-24. Unfortunately, there is very little written on his life in English. For a dated account, see Henry Ganss, "Alveldt or Alveldianus," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (1913), vol. 2.

⁵ The best overviews and analyses in German of Alveldt's place in the exchanges between the Wittenbergers and their opponents on the authority of the papacy are Smolinsky, *Alveldt und Emser*, 50-87 and Johannes Schlageter,

Parallel to this campaign, Alveldt also entered the lists against Luther on the topic of the sacraments. In July 1520 he published his *Tractate Concerning Communion in Both Kinds*. On this topic, too, he seems to have played an important role in pushing forward Luther's reforming vision. It is possible that the bishop of Merseburg, perhaps goaded on by Duke George of Saxony, may also have encouraged this work as a response to Luther's *On the Blessed Sacrament* of late 1519. *The Tractate Concerning Communion* did not call forth a direct response from the reformer, but Luther's references to Alveldt in the prelude to *Babylonian Captivity of the Church* indicate that he was answering him at least in part in that work.⁶ Alveldt responded in turn to Luther's work with *On the Marital State against Brother Martin Luther*, which appeared in German in late 1520 or early 1521, and *A Sermon on Sacramental Confession*, which appeared in Latin and German editions in late 1520.⁷

Thereafter, his exchanges with Luther and the other reformers took a new direction. On January 20, 1522 he presided over a disputation in Our Lady's Church in Weimar between the reformers Johannes Lang and Aegidius Meckler on one hand and the local Franciscans on the other. See *Die sächsischen Franziskaner und ihre theologische Auseinandersetzung mit der frühen deutschen Reformation; Franziskanische Forschungen 52* (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2012), 46-68. For valuable comments in English on Alveldt's contributions to the dispute over papal authority, see Scott Hendrix, *Luther and the Papacy: Stages in a Reformation Controversy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 101-3; and Bagchi, *Luther's Earliest Opponents*, 50-52.

⁶ See *Luther's Works*, vol. 36: *Word and Sacrament II*, ed. by Abdel Ross Wentz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 6-7, 12-17, 23-27.

⁷ For a complete discussion of the exchanges between Luther and Alveldt on the sacraments and analysis of the pamphlets involved, see Smolinsky, *Alveldt und Emser*, 105-43. A brief assessment in English of Alveldt's place among Luther's opponents in the controversy leading to the writing of *Babylonian Captivity of the Church* is available in Bagchi, *Luther's Earliest Opponents*, 121-22.

other about the cloistered life.⁸ This debate was part of broader discussions about the monastic life, initiated by the publication of Luther's *Judgment on Monastic Vows* in 1521, which increasingly drew the Franciscans into the conflicts with the Wittenberg reformers. In the first half of 1523 a group of former Franciscans published works criticizing their former order and other mendicant orders more generally. Caspar Schatzgeyer, the south German provincial of the Observant branch of the order, who had earlier responded to the *Judgment on Monastic Vows*, answered several of these authors in late 1523 and early 1524.⁹ The Saxon province of the order played a prominent role in the defense of the religious life against the criticism of Luther and other reformers.¹⁰ Two later works—likely by Alveldt and that remained unpublished in the sixteenth century—can be regarded as extensions of this campaign: defenses of and commentaries on the Franciscan Rule (1532) and the Rule of the Poor Clares (Latin 1534, German 1535).¹¹

Alveldt also produced several other works at least tangentially related to his polemical and apologetic activities. In 1528 the Leipzig printer V. Schumann published *A Theological Oration*, which Heribert Smolinsky argues was originally delivered before the Magdeburg clergy in convocation. This work parallels the central strategy of *Against the Wittenberg Idol Martin*

⁸ Smolinsky, *Alveldt und Emser*, 21.

⁹ On the growing conflict between the Wittenberg reformers and the Franciscans, see Geoffrey Dipple, *Antifraternalism and Anticlericalism in the German Reformation: Johann Eberlin von Günzburg and the Campaign against the Friars*; St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996) and Schlageter, *Die sächsischen Franziskaner*.

¹⁰ Smolinsky, *Alveldt und Emser*, 403.

¹¹ See Smolinsky, *Alveldt und Emser*, 190-208 and Schlageter, *Die sächsischen Franziskaner*, 316-48.

Luther, by contrasting directly the true church with the false.¹² In 1527 Alveltdt also joined a chorus of Catholic apologists responding to Luther’s attacks on the veneration of the Virgin Mary with German and Latin versions of an explanation of the antiphons *Salve Regina* and *Regina Caeli*. A further work published in 1530, a sermon on Christian burial and explanation of Psalm 50, which traditionally was prayed at the grave site, responded to challenges to traditional burial practices.¹³

Note on translation: The original text of *Against the Wittenberg Idol Martin Luther* includes in its margins scriptural references supporting claims made by Alveltdt. These I have included in parentheses at relevant places in this translation. Alveltdt’s biblical citations are not always completely accurate—in particular it appears that the printer did not have the type for the number 2 and substituted the Tyrian et. Furthermore, he refers to the titles of biblical books in the Vulgate, which do not always correspond to the titles in many of today’s Bibles. Therefore, where necessary, I have provided corrected or updated citations in square brackets within the parentheses. I have also included the pagination of the original printed version of this work in parentheses in the text. Finally, Alveltdt seemed to employ the German term “*Erhebung*” sometimes to designate the solemn translation of the saints’ bones and sometimes as a synonym for canonization to designate the elevation of an individual to the sainthood. I have rendered this term in English as “translation” or “elevation” as suggested by the context.

¹² Smolinsky, *Alveltdt und Emser*, 87-105.

¹³ Smolinsky, *Alveltdt und Emser*, 151-66.

Against the Wittenberg Idol Martin Luther

Augustin Alveldt
Guardian in Halle in Saxony

Proverbs 16 [:27-28]
The foolish man causes evil,
and fire burns on his lips.
A perverse man incites war,
and a babbler divides the princes

Anno XXIII

(Ajv) I, Brother Augustinus von Alvelde, offer and wish the holy church, that is, all Christian people gathered in the unity of the true Christian faith and not scattered, disordered and divided with M. Luther, peace, grace, and blessedness in Christ Jesus, our God and Savior, Amen.

Now have come (certainly we may speak here with King Hezekiah) (4 Reg 19 [2 Kings 19:3]) the days of tribulation, of blaming and slandering God. Now are come to pass the words of the kingly prophet, when he says (Psalm 54 [36:1-4]): “The wicked man has spoken, in that he sins within himself; for the fear of God is not before his eyes, and he deceives himself in his own sight, so that he neither discovers nor detests his own wickedness. The words of his mouth are simply wickedness and blasphemy. He does not wish to perceive anything good to do. Wickedness he devises in his cell, he stands in all evil ways, but he does not hate evil.”

For he is the seven-headed beast that rises from the sea, over whose heads every (Apoc. 13 [Revelation 13]) vicious, slanderous name is written, and, as was revealed to St. John, that opened its mouth in blasphemy, slander, and vilification of the name of God, his holy church, and all those who live in heaven.

But how might one actually challenge, limit, and call to account this dreadful beast, this run-away monk, this pimp [*Ruffian*] and con-man [*Lotter*] of the Holy Spirit (Aijr), who so often has sinned in himself, acted wickedly, blasphemed, forbade good to be done, did and thought up villainy and wickedness in his dwelling, stood in all evil ways, defended and loved all wickedness, and, conversely, annulled and censured all virtues. How he has blasphemed, defamed, and abused his [God's] holy church and scorned the beloved saints, of that all his venomous books are so full that he could hardly squeeze a little truth in between. He falsified the holy, godly Scriptures in many places; polluted the holy sacraments of the church; reviled the

most blessed queen and virgin Mary, along with all the saints on high; from the sacrament of baptism he made a knave's bath so that in some cases the peasants baptize their dogs and say: "Name the child," and baptize them in the name of (to the disparagement of) the most holy Trinity.

The holy chrism (which according to the words of Paul is a sign of the coming of the Holy Spirit) (Rom 8)¹⁴ he calls oil-dolatry [*ölgötzerrey*], just like a completely brutish person who thinks, as St. Paul says (I Cor. 2[:14]), that everything done in the church is folly.

The most venerable sacrament of the altar he calls a sign of the sacrament, that is, bread and wine, so that he brings it into such disrepute and misunderstanding that his wicked rabble even celebrated the mass with beer in Nordhausen.¹⁵ Shame on you for your dishonorable heresy, which is even worse than Pikhartism.¹⁶

The sacrament of confession and penance he has so diminished that (Aijv) among his rabble it is no longer observed except on account of worldly shame and fear.

Out of the sacrament of marriage he has made – as the Devil's master of the hunt – a vain mockery and chase; priests, monks, and nuns all become kith and kin, and as a result, from the priestly office he created a devil's net.¹⁷ And so, with his hounds and preachers, the run-away

¹⁴ To what Alveltdt is referring here is not completely clear, as Romans 8 does not discuss the chrism.

¹⁵ I have not been able to find any account of this event.

¹⁶ During the course of the fifteenth century, heretics from northern France, including Picardy, moved to Bohemia, and in some circles the term "Pikhart" was used to malign the Hussites. See Thomas Fudge, "Incest and Lust in Luther's Marriage: Theology and Morality in Reformation Polemics," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 34 (2003), 335, n. 105. Clearly, Alveltdt is using the term in a generic way to designate all heretics and idolaters.

¹⁷ Alveltdt's meaning is not completely clear at this point. The German reads, ". . . ein eyttel gespöt und hundes jachet pfaffen, munchen und nonnen, gespten und gefreundten gemein und also aus dem priesterlichen stand des

monks, he can drive the poor souls headlong [*fry in den hals*] to the Devil. Thus he blasphemes God in his holy church and the sacraments by mocking the grace of the Holy Spirit, which, as Mark says (Mark 3[:29]), can never come to his aid (because he is the Devil's own and desires no grace).

Since Luther has now condemned, reproached, and cast scorn on the congregation of the holy Christian church (which according to the teaching of St. Paul is one congregation, one church, and one body in which also one spirit is lord, which holds its members together in peace and unity) (Romans 12[:4-5]; 1 Corinthians 12[:12-13]; Ephesians 4[:4-6, 15-16] and 5[:23-30]), including its sacraments, so he must have another church and in it another head and other members, which according to the nature of its spirit is quarrelsome, discordant, and irrational. Therefore, this same enemy of virtue and concord condemns God's beloved friends and saints, who have passed on from the true Christian church and are now with God. And he attempts to raise up a new church and also to populate it with new saints, such as the Wycliffites and Hussites, and those recently burned in the Low Countries.¹⁸ And for this reason the elevation of holy Bishop Benno so grievously afflicted him that he wrote against it not only as a Pikhartian heretic, but also as a raging, raving madman (Aijjr) (is he otherwise worthy of being called human?).

But you will learn shortly the difference between the body of Christ and Luther's church, and afterward each person will decide with which he wants to remain, because they are

teuffels netz gemacht" Because priests, monks, and nuns were considered brothers and sisters in Christ, their marriage to each was decried as incest by Catholic polemicists. See Fudge, "Incest and Lust," 319, 322-23.

¹⁸ Two Augustinian friars from Antwerp, Heinrich Voes and Johann van der Eschen, were burned in Brussels on July 1, 1523 for refusing to recant their "Lutheran" attitudes. For Luther's comments about them in *Against the New Idol and Old Devil*, see WA 15, 184.

completely opposed to each other. What one praises, the other condemns; one tries to resist the flesh to remain in true obedience and to perform virtuous, Christian, and good works; the other gives free reign to the flesh, wishes to be obedient to no one, and in sum, to do nothing good.

The One Church or Congregation

This is the church or congregation, that is, a spiritual body of Christ, of which the lamb Christ is the head, yesterday, today, and in eternity (as Paul writes) (Hebrews 13[:11-16]; Colossians 1[:17-18]). In this body and its members, he has been killed since the beginning of the world (Revelation 13[:8]). The first member in this church or congregation, in which the lamb was killed, was Abel, who was struck down because of his pure sacrifice (Genesis 4[:8]); next Seth, the first to call on God's name (Genesis 4[:25-26], 5[:8, 22-23]);¹⁹ Enoch, who walked with God and afterward was taken up to God and never seen on the earth again; Noah, who preserved the world in the ark and then restored its bounty; Shem, who served God in the tabernacle; Melchizedek, the high priest of God; Job, the righteous; Joshua, Caleb, and Phinehas,²⁰ who avenged the dishonor done to God; Miriam, the sister of Moses; and Rahab,²¹ who willingly housed the strangers; thereafter, holy Abraham, who through his strong faith left the land of his father for a foreign one and was willing to sacrifice his own most beloved son to please God; Isaac, the just; Jacob, the innocent; and (Aiiyv) the other beloved patriarchs.

¹⁹ According to Genesis 4:26, Seth's son Enoch was the first to call on God's name.

²⁰ Caleb was one of the spies sent into the land of Canaan (Numbers 13-14). Phinehas was the nephew of Aaron (Numbers 25:7-8, 11-13).

²¹ Rahab, a woman of Jericho, housed and protected the spies sent into the city by Joshua (Joshua 2).

In the course of time, came elect Moses with his brother Aaron, under whom almighty God gave to this his church a fitting, immaculate law and appropriate testament to observe (Exodus 20), until the promised and great prophet Christ himself visited us on earth.

For this church Moses raised up at God's command a tabernacle (Exodus 4 [40]) (in which day and night divine service was to be observed). After that Samuel assembled a group of monks or spiritual men (who should praise God) in Bethel (1 Roma 10 [1 Samuel 10:7-8 = 1 Kings 10:13]).²² Similarly, in Gilgal Elisha served God with one hundred monks and received alms from the people (4 Roma 4[2 Kings 4:38]).

In this church David instituted, maintained, and increased from day to day the divine service with prayer, hymns of praise, organs, and rejoicing (2 Para 24);²³ Solomon built the most beautiful temple; Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah (5 Reg 9; 2 Para 19 [2 Chronicles 19:4-11]) diligently roused the people in service to God and again purified the temple; Josiah restored it (4 Reg 22 [2 Kings 22:3-6]); and, after it was destroyed, Zerubbabel, Esdras [Ezra], and Nehemiah rebuilt it. Also, the Maccabees struggled so nobly, shed their blood, and finally died for the sake of the temple and God's service and law. In the same way, the holy prophets have so variously, diligently, and earnestly taught, commanded, and counseled holy penitence, fasting, prayer, almsgiving, and other good works for the church, as one finds in many places in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve prophets. And in the same church Solomon taught virtue, discipline, humility, righteousness, temperance, (Aiijr) earnestness, and fear of God in all his books.

²² "Roma" (Romans) is a misprint of "Regi" (Kings).

²³ The reference here is vague, possibly to 1 Chronicles 24.

This church or congregation has never left any depravity, vice, wickedness, or knavery go unpunished. But when it has remained silent and (as one says) peeked through the fingers, then God (who is the head of this church) has fiercely and grievously punished it, as is clear in the contents of the entire Old Testament. But when that same head, Christ our savior, came down to us and visited us, then he rebuilt anew, purified, and commanded the holy twelve apostles and seventy-two disciples that they should assemble it from the four corners of the earth and increase in it the wheat and the chosen (Matthew 10[:1-4]; Luke 10[:1]). To this church he also gave and dedicated the Holy Spirit, to rule it and to teach it everything necessary, to make statutes to command and forbid, and to remain with it, even to the end of the world (John 16[:13-15]; Matthew 28[:19-20]). He increased it such that in one day it grew by around 8,000 people, among whom none retained his own possessions (Acts 2[:41-47] and 4[:4, 32-37]),²⁴ all served God in the temple day and night, and all lived from their common goods and alms (1 Corinthians 16[:1]; 2 Corinthians 8[:1-4]). Paul and Barnabas cared for them, gathered and then sent them alms from Macedonia, Galatia, and Corinth (Galatians 2[:10]), as Paul, Peter, and John had promised and preserved them during the famine under Claudius (Acts 13[11:28-30]); in those days the whole church was nothing but monks and nuns, not according to their dress but according to their lives.

Christ commanded Peter to protect this church from the wolves, thieves, and murderers, that is, from those who tear asunder love and unity, the falsifiers of faith, the thieves of honor, and the murderers of souls (John 10[:8-12]; 14[15:18-20]; 16[:2-4]; 21[:15ff]). This church the wolves, thieves, and murderers have furiously assailed so often from its beginning until now. However, because it was built on the rock that is Christ, they could raise nothing against it

²⁴ Alveldt appears to be adding together the numbers of new adherents to the early Christian movement contained in Acts 2:41 and Acts 4:4.

(Matthew 6[16:18-19]; 1 Corinthians 10[:4]). Although the Devil raised up thirteen universal persecutions, twenty-one *schismata* or divisions, and 300 heresies against it to this point (Matthew 16:18), he was able to accomplish nothing, because the gates of hell can do nothing against it.

This church also has an obvious name, which neither flesh nor the world nor the Devil can take from it, namely Catholic, that is: manifestly universal; for it is free of divisions among its members and united throughout the whole world.²⁵ It is also called apostolic, because it alone has the seat or office of an apostle, in which even now a constant representative of Christ and St. Peter should be sitting (Luke 22[:31-32]). This seat alone has remained whole. But the other seats of the apostles have fallen through the Devil's sieve; for Christ prayed for Peter that his faith would not be separated by the Devil and never again be found lacking. And, therefore, there is no other apostle's office (except the office of Peter) in the entire world stronger in its inheritance. On this seat no pope has sat who could have done damage to this church or congregation in faith or nourishment of the soul (even if he led an evil life and therefore was harmful to himself alone) (Romans 1).²⁶

This church and congregation (in which Christ is the head and in which the Holy Spirit resides, because it is a body and a spirit) alone has examined, tested, confirmed, and accepted the four evangelists (Ephesians 4[:4ff]), similarly the holy four doctors,²⁷ and other writings that together we call the Bible, and (Bjr) proclaimed that faith be given to these alone, and besides,

²⁵ Here, again, Alveldt's meaning is obscure. The German reads, “. . . dann sie ist in yren gelidern yres dings frey und eintrechtig uber die gantzen welt.”

²⁶ Alveldt's reference here is not clear.

²⁷ St. Gregory the Great, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and St. Jerome.

that other gospels and books, written by Nicodemus and others,²⁸ be rejected. But whoever strives, speaks, or writes against it and for this reason is punished or admonished twice and still does not amend his ways, is then thrown out of or flees this church (Titus 3[:10]) and is regarded as a heretic. And it should not be otherwise than that (Exodus 22[:20]); they should be rooted out with the sword, fire, or water just as Moses, Phinehas, Elijah, and Peter have done, under the new law just as under the old (Exodus 33[34:13-15?]; Numbers 25[:5, 7-8, 11ff]; 3 Kings 13[1 Kings 18:40]; Acts 3[5:1-10]); for Christ came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it (Matthew 5[:17]), and the same God who gave the old law also established the new law. For this reason, Peter through the Holy Ghost pulled up the tares Ananias and Sapphira, who did not introduce as much evil into the world as Wycliffe and Luther have, from among the wheat, that is, out of the Christian congregation. Although some, claiming to be evangelical, cry and write in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and German that according to the gospel one should not root the tares out from the wheat but let them grow until the harvest, they remain silent about the fact that at that time the tares should be bound together and thrown into the fire, and the wheat should be gathered up into barns. But these same simpletons do not consider that Christ here has not forbidden at all that the tares be rooted out. Instead, as St. Paul says,²⁹ it is necessary that the heresies arise so that the steadfast are revealed; so, in order to distinguish the wheat, he wants to let the tares grow up with it a while,³⁰ (Bjv) and first at the last judgment to separate all the goats from the sheep and thus throw the wicked into the eternal fire and lead the God-fearing to eternal blessedness (1

²⁸ The *Gospel of Nicodemus*, also referred to as *The Acts of Pilate*, was an apocryphal gospel attributed to Jesus' associate Nicodemus, mentioned in the Gospel of John.

²⁹ 1 Corinthians 11:19.

³⁰ Matthew 13: 24-30.

Timothy 5[:20]).³¹ It is no wonder that the wicked wish to remain unpunished (which, however, Paul does not want), but doubtless it would be much better that they be punished here than that it wait until the hereafter.

This church has now celebrated the holy sacraments for over 1,400 years, highly revered true poverty, chastity, and obedience (all of which Luther now wants to destroy), and diligently practiced fasting, praying, giving alms, going to church, praising God, and other good works. It has remained steadfast in true penitence, in correct belief, in burning love, and sturdy hope. And still today, God willing, it will continue standing and none will challenge it, except those who do not belong to this church.

This church or congregation has through the councils, of which more than thirty were held, first by the apostles and afterwards their successors, legislated, ordained, commanded, and forbade (Acts 1[:13-26]; 6[:2-6]; 15; 7[21:17]) how things are to be observed in matters concerning the holy Christian faith, challenges to holy Scripture, the most revered sacraments, good morals, love, unity, and vice; and these things it ordained and arranged in such a laudable and seemly way that one must obviously recognize that this occurred and was brought about not by human temerity but through the grace of the Holy Spirit.

On the Other Church or Congregation

Now there is another church or congregation, completely opposed and contrary to the first, whose head and king, the Devil (Job 41),³² (Bijr) is not only a liar but a father of lies (John

³¹ Cf. 2 Timothy 2:14 – 4:18.

³² Job 41, which describes Leviathan, might be meant here.

8[:44]), through whose hatred death has come into the whole world. He also has his own members and successors, (Wisdom 7[2: 24]) as we will learn later.

Holy David calls this church an *ecclesia malignantium* (a congregation of the wicked) (Psalm 25[26:5]) that is, the church of blasphemers and the ungodly and evil rogues. But St. John calls it the synagogue of Satan, that is, the Devil's congregation, through which the fire of lewdness and impiety burns (Revelation 7[2:9]).

In this church the Devil has ruled and maintained order with his members since the beginning of the world (Ecclesiasticus 16),³³ and he has gathered in and held those same members in such a state that he left them neither peace nor rest. They must lie and deceive, scold and curse, quarrel and squabble such that even Solomon complained about them, saying: "They cannot sleep unless they have first done wrong (Proverbs 4[:16]), and they have no rest until they have deceived or brought someone down." "They leave the light and wander the path of darkness. They delight in sin and glory in wickedness" (Proverbs 2[:13-14]).

In this church or congregation is Cain, the murderer; Lamech, the lewd; Ham, the mocker; Nimrod, the despoiler; and all their successors in evil (Genesis 4[:8, 19]; 9[:22-27]; 11[10:8-10]).

At the same time this church held its first council in Babylon, where they wanted to build a tower up to heaven and regain what their head, Lucifer, had previously lost (Isaiah 14[:13-14]). God the almighty demolished the council and scattered the participants [conciliabeln] and damned knaves throughout the world. But straightaway, he raised up an evil church (Bijv) in Sodom, Gomorrah, Zeboiim, Admah, and Zoar (doing nothing good and everything evil), which

³³ Presumably, Alveldt is referring to the lists of the wicked mentioned in this chapter.

the Lord consumed entirely with hellish fire (Genesis 19[:24]).³⁴ However, at the same time, (as He still does and has always done) He spared and blessed pious Lot and his daughters, and thus something good in the midst of evil. But afterwards the Devil raised up and established in his church a wicked rabble, for example the 23,000 who prayed to the calf and indulged in other villainy (Exodus 32[:32]), whom immediately thereafter Moses had strangled at God's command. Still the Devil filled his church more and more with wicked knaves and inspired their three leaders--Dathan, Abiram, and Korah--against Moses and Aaron, the leaders of God's church (Numbers 16[:1-35]). These, too, drew a great crowd to themselves and (like Luther now) taught that the whole people of Israel were priests. But the earth opened up (Psalm 103[106:17]) and swallowed these leaders along with their followers and sent them to the depths of hell, to their supreme head. But how this church of the wicked thereafter grew and caused much mischief and bloodshed is described by turns in the 19th chapter of the book of *Judicium*.³⁵ This continued until the archvillain Jeroboam came, who undertook to completely overthrow God's church (as Luther does now) (3 Kings 12[1 Kings 12:2]) and on behalf of the Devil built two churches, one in Dan and one in Bethel, made all people priests, and permitted all evil (3 Kings [1 Kings 16:31-32]). In this he was helped most diligently by two knavish and evil harlots, Jezebel and Maacha Priapissa (2 Para 15[2 Chronicles 15:16]). The first established (Bijr) the Pikhartian pit, where 400 Baalish and 400 Pikhartian priests feasted at their table.³⁶ The second increased and

³⁴ In Genesis 14:8 the kings of Zeboiim, Admah, and Zoar are identified as the allies of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah.

³⁵ In fact, Judges 21.

³⁶ Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab, encouraged her husband to abandon the worship of Yahweh for the worship of Baal and Asherah. To this end she organized guilds of prophets of Baal and Asherah and persecuted the prophets of Israel. There are several people named Maacah in the Bible. Here the reference is to the daughter of Absalom, wife

strengthened the devilish Priapist sect, and that so strongly that Elijah claimed that beside himself there remained none steadfast in God's church (3 Kings 19[1 Kings 19:10, 14]). For, (as is now clear in Lutheran areas) when the altars of the temples were smashed, the divine service overthrown, and the servants and prophets of God murdered, he claimed that the whole house of Israel had fallen. For that reason, God the Lord consoled him, announcing and showing that there remained loyal to him still 7,000 men, who had not yet bent their knees before Baal³⁷ (Luther's forerunner) (Numbers 1:[45-46]). Although the number 7,000 seems insignificant when measured against 6 x 100,000, still it was a sign that God will always preserve and bless the good in the midst of the evil. These other heretics, both men and women, followed: Athaliah, Ahab,³⁸ Ahaz,³⁹ Antiochus,⁴⁰ Annas, Caiaphas, Herod, and Pilate, each with his or her own rabble. Also, at the same time, the Devil awakened still another sect with the name Sadducees (Matthew 22[:23]; Acts 23[:8]). These wanted to acknowledge no angels, no soul, and no life after this one. Nor did they tolerate any worldly authority, rather they wanted to live freely and they believed no Scripture except the five books of Moses.

of Rehoboam, mother of Abijah, and grandmother of Asa (1 Kings 15: 1-14; 2 Chronicles 11:20-22; and 2 Chronicles 15:16). The reference in 2 Chronicles 15:16 to the abominable image Maacah had made for Asherah likely called to mind Priapus, a minor fertility god in Greek mythology, sometimes identified with the Moabite god Baal-Peor.

³⁷ The text says "Balaam" here, but clearly "Baal" is meant.

³⁸ Athaliah is usually considered to be the daughter of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel of Israel and the wife of King Jehoram of Judah (2 Kings 8 and 2 Chronicles 21-23).

³⁹ King of Judah from 736-716 BCE (2 Kings 16 and Isaiah 7).

⁴⁰ Presumably Antiochus IV Epiphanes, Seleucid emperor from 175-164 BCE. He is referred to in Daniel 11:21-32.

In this church belongs also Judas the traitor; the reviler of God and murderer on the left side of Christ; the liar Ananias and his wife; and the cursed knave Simon Magus.

When the Devil noted that after the work of saving God's children wrought by the holy apostles, his church was greatly weakened and, on the other hand, the church of God was greatly strengthened, (Biiyv) he was moved to furious envy toward God's church and became extremely angry, and, as St. John has shown (Apoc 12[Revelation 12]), he sowed evil seeds—that is, dangerous heresies—among the seeds of the holy gospel that Christ and his apostles had scattered, from which the lambs of Christ became diseased and finally were ruined (Matthew 13[:24-25]). Christ himself has lamented and Paul has indicated how the false prophets were established in conformity with their head, of which we have been warned recently by holy Scripture (2 Corinthians 11[: 13-15]).

But the holy apostles restrained and suppressed these evil seeds to such a degree (Matthew 24[:11, 24-26]; Acts 20[:28-31]; 1 John 2[:1ff]) that the weeds were not able to grow fully, and the wheat among them could grow and multiply. Thereafter, the Devil, with God's permission, awoke in his church raging tyrants, like Dacianum,⁴¹ Nero, Decium,⁴² Diocletian, and others who martyred and sent to heaven the beloved apostles and other beloved friends of God and members of Christ's church. Then, as eternal God took to himself these same apostles and members, the Devil also gave to his church new leaders and apostles like Maxentius, the ruthless;⁴³ Cerinthus;⁴⁴ Ebionem and Marcion, the slanderers and defamers of God's mother and

⁴¹ This name appears in a number of the histories of the saints, usually associated with their persecutors.

⁴² Trajan Decius, Roman emperor from 249 to 251 CE. With an edict in 250 demanding that all residents of the empire sacrifice to the Roman gods, he initiated what became known as the Decian persecution.

⁴³ Roman emperor (r. 306-312 CE) who opposed Constantine at the Battle of Milvian Bridge.

⁴⁴ Gnostic heretic who flourished c. 100 CE.

the queen of mercy;⁴⁵ Arius, the denier of Christ's divinity and his true sacred body and blood; Donatus, the falsifier of baptism; Acesium, the condemner of holy penance;⁴⁶ Basilides, Dulcinus, and Mohammad, the persecutors of the married estate;⁴⁷ Anastasius, the condemner of spiritual authority;⁴⁸ Aerius, the condemner of fasting;⁴⁹ Julianus, the run-away monk and Pikhartian knave;⁵⁰ (Biiijr) Jovian, the persecutor of chastity;⁵¹ and Felicianum, the profaner and burner of holy pictures;⁵² Nestorius, Moricum,⁵³ Appollinarum,⁵⁴ Euticen,⁵⁵ and many more, who all together doubted and erred concerning the most holy Trinity and the humanity of Christ, and also with their errors have sent a great crowd from their church to their head, the Devil, in the depths of hell. The four doctors and other holy doctors of the Christian church have so fiercely

⁴⁵ The Ebionites were an early Jewish-Christian sect that accepted Jesus as Messiah but denied his divinity. Marcion was a second-century CE heretic who rejected the Old Testament and endorsed a docetic Christology.

⁴⁶ A fourth-century Novatian bishop of Constantinople, who maintained that sins committed after baptism could not be forgiven.

⁴⁷ Basilides was a second-century Gnostic who actually revered marriage. Dulcino of Novara was a late thirteenth and early fourteenth-century heretic who rejected marriage along with private property. Mohammad is likely included in this list because of his endorsement of polygamy.

⁴⁸ Anastasius I Dicorus, Eastern Roman emperor from 491-518 CE. He was a miaphysite Christian and in 512 deposed the patriarch of Chalcedon so that he could replace him with a Monophysite.

⁴⁹ Aerius of Pontus, fourth century CE, rejected prescribed fasts.

⁵⁰ To whom Alveltdt is referring here is unclear, perhaps the Roman emperor Julian the Apostate (r. 361-363 CE).

⁵¹ A fourth-century critic of Christian asceticism who was condemned as a heretic by synods in Rome and Milan in 393 CE.

⁵² The identity of this person is unknown.

⁵³ Peter Mongo, one of the leaders of the Monophysite party in Alexandria in the late fifth century CE.

⁵⁴ Apollinaris, a fourth-century CE bishop of Laodicea who denied the existence of a rational soul in Christ.

⁵⁵ Eutyches, a fourth-century heresiarch credited with founding Monophysitism.

and valiantly contended, written, and fought against these errors and heretics that there are more books than there are days in the year, with which, by the grace of God, they have cut them down and rooted them all out. That is, until the arrival of the arch-knave Wycliffe (who not that long ago arose in England), from whose books afterwards hatched the Bohemian goose,⁵⁶ which has flown not much further than over its own land (at least openly) and otherwise [whose heresy] has been extinguished by the holy Christian church, except for what glowed among the ashes in a few perverted hearts, which the wind from Aquilon⁵⁷ has recently revived. But first now, as the time of tribulation nears, the Devil himself has come and mounted on a false monk (that is) on Martin Luther. This Luther is the Devil's saddle, with which he saddles the Antichrist, and when he has ridden them into the ground, he will throw both horse and saddle into the hellish fire.

This Lotter⁵⁸ is not just a simple author of villainies, evils, and heresies, but also (without introducing to him now at the time of the Devil what he has forgotten from the ancients) a renewer of all earlier evil and wickedness (Biiijv) and now the Devil's vicar and a chief in his church.

What he now holds for leaders, members, and saints in this same church are those named above, who now receive their eternal reward in the place where they did their work. But what sort of members are now in the Devil's church militant is not to be written about. Almighty God can even in an instant make a severed limb into a living limb and from a sinner again a righteous person. Therefore, I will not write about them, and I place my hope entirely in God that they themselves will acknowledge this, and through God's attraction they will flee from the wolves

⁵⁶ The Czech reformer Jan Hus.

⁵⁷ On the north wind, as a bringer of evil, see Proverbs 25:23; Ecclesiasticus 43:20-21.

⁵⁸ A play on Luther's name and the term "Lotterbube" ("a vagrant or blackguard").

into the true sheepfold of St. Peter, that almighty God will gracefully help them and awaken Luther (to whom I do not begrudge this).

But, with that I come to the blasphemous little book in which Luther recently raged more than wrote (God forgive him) against the translation or canonization of the holy father and bishop Benno and other beloved saints of God. So, you should take note what was revealed above about how the Devil's church has been ever since its very beginning dedicated with all of its members and diametrically opposed to God's church and its members. For the same reason Luther also fights against it. For as long as he has neither head nor members from his church in heaven, he wants to throw the saints of God's church out of heaven—I believe if he were able, he would throw God himself out—although he boasts about his martyrs in heaven, especially Hus and the heretics burned in Brussels.⁵⁹ (Cjr) But I am concerned that if they died in their heresy, they now have joined their head in the depths of hell for eternity. And besides, there are also certainly still more from Luther's rabble who have been hanged or broken on the wheel, who perhaps might also be martyrs in his church. Nonetheless, he does not have confessors in his church, and also few virgins, especially virgins of conscience, because all his members fight strenuously against these two things, just as he has written strenuously against them, which one perhaps has discovered even less in him. He wants to have a few widows in his church, but usually the meddlesome kind, of which Paul writes in 1 Timothy 5[:13].

The doctors of his church are: Arius, Wycliffe, Hus, and others I have listed above, and the cattle are equal to their stall and the herd their pasture. Luther has such respectable saints in his church, whom he raises up happily, while he wants to tread the saints of God under foot. Therefore, it also vexes him greatly that the holy Christian church honors the beloved saints so,

⁵⁹ See WA 15, 184.

that it celebrates their feasts, translates and canonizes their bodies and bones, who, however, as Saint Paul says, were members of Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit while they were on earth (1 Corinthians 6[:15-20]); these he condemns, scorns, and mocks, and elevates against them members of his own church. These are knaves and vixens, run-away monks and nuns, wanton, drunken, and lascivious priests, adulterers and degraders of virgins. These he wishes to make saints, while they are still in this life, and not tolerate that the holy father and bishop Benno (whose holy life has been tested and accepted by the church) should be elevated and counted among the (Cjv) number of the living, as the holy Christian church has done for a long time in commendable practice. Did not Abraham purchase a piece of land in order to bury his beloved wife Sarah, (Genesis 23) where Adam and Eve had been buried; and did not Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob especially arrange to be buried there; and Joseph at his end made his brothers swear that they would take up his bones out of Egypt to the same place (Genesis 50[:25]), which then holy Moses took up with him out of Egypt and faithfully carried away, as the brothers had sworn (Exodus 13[:19]).

King Josiah had the graves of the Pikhartian prophets opened up, their bones taken out and burned to powder (4 Kings 23[2 Kings 23:16-18]). But the grave of the prophet who had chastised Jeroboam, the heretics' friend, for his evil ways he left untouched (as we now care for the bones of the saints) and allowed his bones to lie there and be preserved honorably. But how holy Scripture praises, exalts, and honors those who lived virtuously and committed to holiness we have described for us in the 44th to the 50th chapters of Ecclesiasticus.

Perhaps Luther also wishes to dig up his saints and like the beloved patriarchs have them taken into another land and elevated. But he is unable to bring this about, so he wishes to have the ashes gathered and made into wheel and gallows dust, which he can then exhibit as his relics;

but he can't do this with his two martyrs, whom he passes off as saints in his scandalous booklet⁶⁰ (perhaps because the ashes are too long gone). But maybe he might still find on the gallows the run-away monk who was hanged outside Mühlhausen this past winter,⁶¹ (Cijr) and otherwise he can also regard as saints and put in his calendar the many wanton priests, run-away monks and nuns, who this year suffered a foolish death here and there or otherwise died; for in such a church belong such saints that one does not dig up and translate from churches and churchyards (like our saints), but rather must seek and scrape together under the gallows and wheels; just like those from his rabble who frequently say that they would be just as happy, if they were buried under the gallows as in a consecrated churchyard. Perhaps some will get this wish. But the church or congregation is like its burial.

But now, Luther, I want to lay against you how treacherously and often you have slandered and injured with your insolent lies holy Bishop Benno and the holy church in this your libelous little book.

First, you begin by lying that the pope and his rabble do not wish to suffer that the gospel be proclaimed.⁶² If you mean by gospel what you and your apostles have proclaimed up to now, according to which they permit all manner of villainy and evil, which they themselves have pursued—that is, what they have begun to do and to teach—that I will concede, but otherwise not (Acts 1[:1]).

Second, you lie that the popes raise up few saints, and those they have canonized are papal and not Christian saints.⁶³ Here you hang high on your lies; for who other than the pope

⁶⁰ WA 15, 184.

⁶¹ It is unclear to whom Alveldt is referring here.

⁶² WA 15, 183.

⁶³ WA 15, 184.

has established and introduced all the festivals for the beloved saints, aside from your congregation of saints like Hus, Wycliffe, Jacobellus,⁶⁴ Jerome of Prague,⁶⁵ Rochezan,⁶⁶ (Cijv) and the likes? For these you might make feasts of Bacchus and Venus, and celebrate these with your run-away monks and nuns.

Third, you lie that through the translation of saints' bodies the Christian people turn away from God's grace,⁶⁷ cling to stone and wood, and from this become lazy, gluttonous, and idle fat pigs in the chapters and monasteries. What further lies do you dream up, my Luther? But what does the cross mean other than the little word "*crux*" and the ~~word~~ expression "*crux Christi*" than Christ? Can the expression "*crux Christi*" not hurt me (if I read it in Scripture and am thereby reverential and thankful to Christ), so little also can a crucifix carved from wood hurt me, if I do not read Scripture, but I am moved by it to remember the sufferings of Christ and to thankfulness. Similarly, I can be moved just as well by thinking on the carved and painted pictures and stories of the beloved saints, the grace they received from God, and that they acted and suffered according to his will, as I can be reminded from Scripture. And thereby I am made thankful to God (as this serves us all as an example and model of goodness) and so sin much less just as if I read the same in Scripture. But since you like to write big books about your saints (you want to put in them bare-face lies as is your habit), so you have no material that does not bring you shame, and therefore, I would rather be a fattened pig (as you call it) among godly people who serve and honor God day and night than live among your rabble, who are full days and nights and in between (Cijr) even less temperate and wallow like pigs in their

⁶⁴ Jacob of Mies, a Czech reformer and colleague of Hus.

⁶⁵ A friend and colleague of Hus, he, too, was condemned at the Council of Constance and ultimately executed.

⁶⁶ Jan Rokycana, a fifteenth-century Hussite theologian.

⁶⁷ WA 15, 183.

lasciviousness. Those who decamped and were among us, are now (God be praised) almost all departed from the monasteries and chapters, and therefore out of the Christian church and into your pigsties and Pikhartian pits; indeed, the devout stand before you and the Devil.

Fourth, you lie,⁶⁸ [just as you do] about what Pope Hadrian [VI] did, concerning what the Council of Constance did when they burned your holy martyr Hus and, on the other hand, [you claim] elevated blessed Thomas Aquinas. Indeed, this is clearly a lie (although with you lying is an easy thing), for St. Thomas, as is abundantly clear, was elevated long before the heretic Hus was burned.⁶⁹ You do this because you cannot smuggle your saints in any other way. But our church has nothing to do with your saints. Put them in your *Cisio-Janus*.⁷⁰ We don't want to dirty our hands with that.

Fifth, you lie even against yourself when you say⁷¹ that the gospel must be truly observed. And that is true, if it refers to not just being heard but also observed with works. How often have you, together with all your apostles, written and preached that one should observe it alone in faith and do no good works? And you lie besides,⁷² without Scripture, witness, or proof (which I also in no way grant to you without evidence) that St. Benno acted openly against the holy gospel, and if he had ever done that in his whole life, you have not proven thereby that he had not confessed or not done penance. But if it were necessary, the opposite could very easily be proven. (Ciiyv)

⁶⁸ WA 15, 184.

⁶⁹ Here, again, Alveldt's meaning is not completely clear, but this seems the best interpretation of his intent. St. Thomas was canonized in 1323 by Pope John XXII not at the Council of Constance (1414-1418).

⁷⁰ A tear-off calendar.

⁷¹ WA 15, 187.

⁷² WA 15, 186.

Sixth, you lie so unashamedly when you say that Hadrian's bull made beloved Benno a god⁷³ *eo, quod vocat eum divinum hominem*; because God himself said: "I have said to you, you are gods" (John 10[:34]; Psalm 81[82:6]). Similarly, he said to Moses: "I have made you a god over Pharaoh"—thus I now say: "Pfui, would that God had given you your due and punished you! Shame on you, you evil Luther!"

Seventh, you lie⁷⁴ that the pope has established a new article of faith in that he has proclaimed Benno to be holy. Ach, you sly fool, do you even know what faith is, what the community of saints is, what the members of Christ are in body and spirit (Ephesians 4[:4]; 1 Corinthians 12[: esp. 12 and 13])? It is no wonder that you are obdurate in this and in other things, since you do not have the spirit of Christ but rather the spirit of your church. Therefore, for you everything with which the church is engaged is folly, as St. Paul says (1 Corinthians 2[:14]): "*Quia animalis homo, id est qui spiritum Christi non habet, non percipit que Dei sunt, sed videntur sibi stulticia.*"

Eighth, you lie⁷⁵ cunningly that the pope only pretended to pray and in that mocked God's prayer, since his bulls contain the sentence: "And we have prayed to God that we do not err in these things"—and you seek to confirm your lies thus: since the pope confidently acknowledged the holiness of Benno on the basis of his signs, why then did he pray to God that he not err? Luther, listen, here the Devil discredits himself in you. From what sign (tell me) does one know that the baptizer of Christ is in heaven other than from his justification and his holy life, since he did no miracles? (Ciii)r Nevertheless, the pope could, if he wished to establish

⁷³ WA 15, 187-188.

⁷⁴ WA 15, 191.

⁷⁵ WA 15, 191.

another festival for him to honor God and the holy church, certainly ask God the Lord that he did not err in doing that. But for you everything good is contrary.

Ninth, you lie maliciously⁷⁶ as a malignant falsifier of Scripture that the holy Scripture says little or even absolutely nothing about the saints in heaven, but speaks rather about the saints here on earth. My dear fellow, but what does Paul write in Ephesians 4[:8]? Does he not write that Christ released the Devil's captives and led them to heaven with him? But tell me, you runaway monk, what kind of saints are these, if Scripture says nothing about saints! Have you read nothing of this in Scripture? Then read Ecclesiasticus 44 and all of the Revelation of John! But I know well that you have said that Ecclesiasticus is not a canonical book and that Revelation is a dream just like the fourth book of Esdras. But I do not dispute with a Jew, whose canon does not include Ecclesiasticus, but with a perverted Christian, against whom the Scripture accepted by the church is sufficient. Do you want to regard Revelation as a dream? Then, by the same token, you must dismiss all the prophets like Ezekiel, Daniel, Jeremiah, Zachariah, and Hosea, who saw such miraculous visions, and like John who spoke in strange images and figures. Go, take a close look at yourself and learn to recognize your blindness!

Tenth, you lie fraudulently⁷⁷ when you want to claim that the Psalm "Praise God in his saints"⁷⁸ refers to temples of stone and wood. Thus St. Paul has said that everything that has occurred here, has occurred in a figure and sign,⁷⁹ (Ciiijv) and that men exist not for the sake of the temple, but more the temple was built for the sake of men, who are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6[:19])—and that everything recorded occurs for our betterment (Romans

⁷⁶ WA 15, 192.

⁷⁷ WA 15, 195.

⁷⁸ Psalm 150:1.

⁷⁹ 1 Corinthians 10:6,11.

13[15:4]): Scripture is here to be understood as speaking more about the spiritual than the physical temple, and the Hebrew in this place, where you force it to support your side, is more suitably translated into German in this way. For one has in Hebrew there “*bekadeschu*.” Now the word “*kadesch*” means not only holiness or holy temple but also in many places in Scripture a holy person, as for example in Psalm 33[Psalm 34:9]: “*Timete Dominum, omnes sancti eius!*” Similarly, you have “*kadoschaff*,” that is, “his saints”;—in Psalm 77[Psalm 78:41], “*Et sanctum Israel*”; in Psalm 105[Psalm 106:16], “*Et Aaron sanctum Domini*,” where there is always the word “*kadesch*”—and therefore our translation is correct. Likewise, the holy fathers correctly and truthfully interpret this word as “saints.”

Eleventh, you lie temptingly⁸⁰ that when Christ said that one will pray neither here nor in Jerusalem (John 4[:21]), he did away with all physical locations for prayer. That you are here lying once more is evident from the fact that Christ, after he said this, himself went into the temple and there prayed (John 8[:2]); furthermore, the first Christian church diligently praised and called on God the Lord in the temple (Acts 2[: esp. v 46]); Peter went into the temple with John at Nones⁸¹ (Acts 3[:1]); and Paul made his offering in the temple (Acts 21[:26]) and taught the Corinthians that they should not disdain the temple (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). But perhaps there is no need for God’s temple in your church, because your congregation comes together seldom or never to serve God or do something good. You can accomplish evil (Djr) in any place, and especially in the corners and dark Pikhartian pits. Our temple has now stood for 1,400 years, and it will certainly continue to stand before you and the Devil.

⁸⁰ WA 15, 196.

⁸¹ The fifth canonical hour.

These are Luther's signs and a lie fabricated against the Christian church and the holy Bishop Benno, for which a good *calcographus* could certainly assign the number 911 and still not encompass all his lies in it. With what other abusive words and names he has slandered the holy man of God, I will leave to God the Lord, according to the teaching of Paul (Romans 12[:19]); he will certainly answer and also punish it in time.

I would like to know who has sent out this shameless slanderer of saints and also commissioned him to write, scold, and teach. Paul says that no one should preach unless he is sent (Romans 10[:15]). Then, who sent him? I can truly find no one who sent him other than the spirit that led Judas out of the congregation of Christ and among the wrathful Jews and evil knaves to betray Christ (John 3[13:27]) –in this Luther wishes to sell and betray the same spiritual body of Christ, that is, the churches of the world, to the Devil and the flesh, just as Judas did to Christ, after he was led out of the congregation of the holy Christian church (Romans 12[:4-5]; 1 John 2[:18-19]). Therefore, Judas is nothing more than the figure of Luther, and he [Luther] has nothing more to do than to hang himself.

Luther has searched here and there for a long time and (as he writes) could find nothing other than Moses' grave and the bronze snake.⁸² Look further, you blind leader of the blind! In all of this you sought nothing other than a bird call. Could you not find the grave of Joseph *et ossium eius laudem*, (Djv) the translation of his bones (Ecclesiasticus 23[49:15]), similarly, the grave of the prophet whom Josiah saved (4 Kings 23[:17-18]) and afterwards the grave and bones of Elisha who raised up the dead man? All of these your blind eyes have not seen or—because they do not serve you in your wickedness—perhaps did not wish to see. But where will you find the graves of Brother Johann and Brother Heinrich, the two Augustinian monks, your

⁸² WA 15, 184.

two martyrs who were burned at Brussels? That I don't know. But you complain extensively that they were killed and not regarded as martyrs. Don't let that gnaw at your heart; for if they were true martyrs, then rejoice that you have two patron saints in your synagogue, but if they are (as one says) wicked knaves, then why lament them so much? If you claim, however, that Hadrian is for this reason a murderer⁸³ and, if he does not repent this, is damned, then you must equally damn St. Peter, [who killed] Ananias and Sapphira⁸⁴ and holy Elijah who killed around 800 Pikhartian priests,⁸⁵ and similarly damn other beloved saints even more.

You accuse the beloved holy father and bishop Benno⁸⁶ of submitting to Pope Gregory VII for help against the tyrannical Emperor Henry (who undertook, as you would now like to see, to take temporal goods from the church with illegitimate and ungodly force), and you condemn the same pope together with Bishop Benno (because for this reason he deposed and then placed the emperor under the ban, in which state he then died). Furthermore, you do not regard Benno as a saint, because this occurred on account of temporal goods.⁸⁷ Ach, how diligently you seek to vilify the saints and prelates of the Christian church, (Dijr) none of whom, indeed, you spare. Should holy Benno be damned, because he sought to protect his prelates and equally his church, the plundering of which you would have supported? Then what about Moses, Abraham and David, Phinehas, Elijah, and St. Peter, who also for the sake of temporal goods spilled blood and for that not only banned, but even condemned the wicked to death? Just read the tenth chapter of the Gospel of Mark, not superficially but with attentive diligence! Then

⁸³ WA 15, 184.

⁸⁴ Acts 5:1-10.

⁸⁵ 1 Kings 18.

⁸⁶ WA 15, 185-186.

⁸⁷ WA 15, 186.

you will find that the Christian church not only may have temporal goods but should have them.⁸⁸

You, enemy of the saints, you scratch together another matter against the holy Benno in that you want to remove his name, which you do not presume to take from the book of the living but from the hearts of devout Christians (which you could not carry out with lies) and accuse the holy man⁸⁹ of wishing to murder the Archduke of Meissen for a slap in the face and thus acting against the gospel (which teaches the opposite). Shame on you, Luther, what you so diligently teach others you don't do yourself. Tell me: who killed the Archduke? Did God do it? Then why do you disparage God's vengeance, since it is written (Romans 12[:19]): "Vengeance is mine, I will repay"? Did the Devil do it? Then rejoice that you have a patron saint and martyr in your Pikhartian church! I maintain that he who murdered the first-born in Egypt and killed Ananias and Sapphira also struck down the Archduke. Just as little as the angel of God, Moses, and St. Peter are shedders of blood, just so little also is Bishop Benno a murderer, (Dijv) but you are a useless babbler who never has his fill of scoffing—but that is no big thing, because a useless man can take no honor from a devout man with his scoffing.

On this you seek high and low and want to bring something important to market; you take Paul and Deuteronomy as witnesses⁹⁰ that miracles are very deceptive, and one should not believe that such things are important. Tell on, where have Paul and Moses (whom you have drawn here by the hair) written such words? For, if that were true, then neither Paul nor Moses nor any of the apostles believed in miracles. Perhaps you agree with and share the opinions of

⁸⁸ Mark 10:29-30.

⁸⁹ WA 15, 187.

⁹⁰ WA 15, 188.

the Jews that the miracles of Christ, our beloved God and Lord, also happened by the Devil's power and that the Christian faith (which also has been verified by signs) is a deception. Shame on you in your lies, you useless monk. You slander further God's⁹¹ vengeance by claiming that Archbishop Wilhelm unjustly lost an eye for the sake of temporal goods; and because Bishop Benno and the Provost of Meissen prayed for that, it happened through the Devil. Master Luther, my dear fellow, here you belong with the Jews who said that Christ drove out devils in the name of Beelzebub (Matthew 12[:24]). I am absolutely convinced that the same spirit that blasphemed against Christ through the Jews has here spoken through you. If you did not have the words "temporal goods" (which you use so often to excite envy), with what would you slander the holy church? And yet you know that the proper use of temporal goods is not forbidden to the church. Tell on, when Joshua had Achan stoned for the sake of temporal goods, did he do wrong (Joshua 7[:24-25])? What was it that Ananias and Sapphira hid from the (Dijr) church and did not surrender? Was it not temporal goods? How is it, then, that you come forward like a rabid dog on a chain, claiming that the holy patriarchs have only punished for the sake of God's word?⁹² Are you not ashamed just once to lie? Don't you mean that Archduke Wilhelm lost his eye, more because he wanted to restrict the divine service (which is the true word of God), *cui servire regnare est*,⁹³ than because of temporal goods? Who is blinder than you so that you regard as unimportant⁹⁴ [the fact] that holy Benno crossed over the Elbe with dry feet, because it is possible for the Devil, too, to do that. As I understand it, it is your opinion that he was able to do this through the power of the Devil. Then you could also say that Christ, and

⁹¹ WA 15, 188-189.

⁹² WA 15, 189.

⁹³ To serve him is to rule.

⁹⁴ WA 15, 189-190.

also St. Peter, walked on water with the same help.⁹⁵ That is no surprise, because the name of the Devil is more common for you than the name of God, and for this reason nothing pleases you more than to blaspheme and abuse. If there were a devout Christian vein in you, you could certainly write that this occurred through God rather than through the Devil.

Further, you dismiss the book *Dialogorum Sancti Gregorii*.⁹⁶ That is no wonder, for some heretics have also dismissed the Gospels of John and Luke. Should we then also dismiss it, just because your rabble won't have it? *Dixit insipiens in corde suo: non est deus*;⁹⁷ but the foolish man has said there is no God. Should one immediately believe, then, that there is no God, because a fool has said so?

You also assert, besides,⁹⁸ that were Bishop Benno holy, one should prove that. Then tell us, there is a common rumor that you are possessed by three devils, (Dijv) can you also prove that this is not true? I can't really say, but since nothing good comes out of you, I fear there is nothing good in you.

You grumble furiously against the glorious preparations for the translation of holy Benno and insist that the same should be given to the poor.⁹⁹ From this I perceive completely that Judas, the thief and betrayer (John 12[:3-6]) (whom I believed to have died in a noose) still lives in you, who grumbled devilishly about the expensive ointment that the Magdalene poured out on the Lord—but he did this (as the Evangelist says) not for the sake of the poor, but because he was a thief. I do not know whether you are a thief, but I do know well that it is rumored that you

⁹⁵ Matthew 14:25-29.

⁹⁶ *The Dialogues* of Gregory the Great.

⁹⁷ “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” Psalm 14:1.

⁹⁸ WA 15, 190.

⁹⁹ WA 15, 193.

are a defender and protector of the monstrosity thief, the chalice thief, the treasure thief, the money thief, and the document thief. Hence an old parable that a penny is like the thief, and this one also: you carry water on a pole. Oh, dear Luther, if you and your rabble wanted to give to the poor, you could certainly give service and honor to God without challenge or hindrance. They say, however, that you have given far more to the maids whom you procure for their virginity than you have distributed to the poor. I find this hard to believe, because it would be an especially knavish trick.

You wish further¹⁰⁰ that no one be regarded as holy (through whom God has already worked miracles and who has also lived a holy life), unless one can prove conclusively that they were saved and remained with God. But how will you prove (Diiijr) that Peter or Paul, the apostles, patriarchs, prophets, or martyrs were saved in the end? Shame on you for your foolish allegations and your blasphemous abuse. You want the same and take Paul (1 Corinthians 4[:5]) to support¹⁰¹ the claim that one should not judge or regard anyone as holy before the last judgment.

But how frightfully the spirit rages within you. Before you wanted the saints to be only on earth and have none in heaven, and you wanted to prove that with the words of Paul.¹⁰² Now you want to have none on earth and want to prove this with Paul. You want, and you don't want; you disagree with yourself and your own spirit. You want to regard as holy none of the saints the pope has elevated, and yet you recognize beloved Elizabeth and Francis,¹⁰³ whom the pope canonized and translated. See now what a mad, fickle man you are! Who can take you at your

¹⁰⁰ WA 15, 193-194.

¹⁰¹ WA 15, 194.

¹⁰² WA 15, 192.

¹⁰³ WA 15, 194-195.

word, or how does one answer you in this? Indeed, nothing other than: it is so; or it is, it is not—and thus one answers the fool in his folly (Proverbs 6[26:5]).

And so to come to an end at this time. I hold you to your teaching as being completely against, *generalia contra*, how one should praise, honor, and call on God in his saints, and on this you have written so abundantly contrarily. But your drivel is so completely run through with lies, and so contradictory, and therefore so obscure, that one could very easily run aground and never come again to the true light. On this stand all your foundations. It is well known that the holy Christian church now for 1,300 years has not honored and praised the saints as God, also has not called on them (Diiijv) other than: Holy Mary, pray to God for us! Holy Peter, pray to God for us! and so on. So now, if even a damned person can pray to God for his brothers that they not be damned (Luke 16[:22, 27-28]), how is it, then, that the beloved saints should not pray to God, our creator, redeemer, and savior, for us? To him be praise and honor forever and ever. Amen.