

Letter 228: 23 November 1524, Strasbourg, The Strasbourg Preachers to Martin Luther

Printed in CorrBucer 1, pp. 288-297, Ep. 83 and WABr. 3, pp. 378-81, Ep. 796.

[*Summary*]: They are concerned about the dissension between Luther and Karlstadt concerning the interpretation of the Eucharist. So far they have preached, with Luther, that the bread and wine are the body and blood of the Lord, although they encouraged the congregation to take communion only “for the memory of the Christ’s death; the rest does not benefit them or lead them to salvation, for the flesh does not benefit even if Christ is present in the same form in which he was suspended on the cross.” Some people in Basel and Zurich support Karlstadt’s views. They urge Luther to clarify the question. There is also talk about a disagreement between Luther and Karlstadt concerning infant baptism, a practice they themselves observe. They deplore the fact that there is dissension about external matters. It is shameful, moreover, that they cannot account fully for their practices on the basis of scripture. They describe the practice they follow in celebrating the Lord’s Supper. The diversity of rites gives offence. They hope to achieve some uniformity at least with neighbouring churches.

Treger [see above, Ep. 222 headnote] has publicly accused them of inciting unrest and teaching heresy. There was some commotion, when the people stormed the Dominican convent and removed prostitutes from the cells, but all is quiet again. There are some protests on account of the clergy being asked to take out citizenship. They say that they may be forced to abandon the city. Erasmus’ work defending free will has stirred up doubts, especially in Cologne, as Hinne Rode told them. They encourage Luther to respond to Erasmus and Karlstadt, but without rancour.

They send their greetings to Melanchthon and Paulus Phrygio. They ask Luther to give their messenger, Nicolaus Merxheimer, a kind reception.