

Letter 363a: [June/July 1528, Strasbourg], The Strasbourg Preachers to [Balthasar Mercklin]

This open letter to the imperial vice-chancellor and bishop of Hildesheim, Balthasar Mercklin, was published under the title *Kurtze summ aller lere und predig, so zu Strasburg gelert und gepredigt würt*. It is printed in the appendix of CorrBucer 3, pp. 378-85.

[*Summary*]: They assure Mercklin of their respect for the authority of the emperor, but it is their task to uphold the honour of God and the truth of the gospel. The sum of their teaching is this: They encourage people to put their faith in Christ and to submit patiently to the authorities. They recognize the sacrament of baptism and of the Eucharist, which the believer “eats as bread and body in the Lord” and “in remembrance of [Christ’s] death.” They encourage the people to pray and fast in the true sense and to honour the saints, although only Christ can intercede for them. They say nothing about purgatory because it is not mentioned in Scripture. They counsel people to confess to God and men, but to men only for the sake of Christian advice. External matters, such as food, drink, and type of clothing are unimportant. They exhort the people to keep the vows they have made if possible, but they free them of those that have been undertaken against the will of God. They teach the people to obey human laws, but in divine matters they cannot wait for the decision of councils or other human beings. They are obliged to preach against those who believe that they can earn God’s grace through the mass and other ceremonies. They must act against those who would obscure the Word of God; at the same time they are intent on “observing order and Christian charity.” They offer to defend their teaching on the basis of Scripture and, if convinced of error, to suffer capital punishment. It is their desire to please God and the authorities, but God first and foremost.