

Letter 377b: 23 January [1529, Strasbourg], The Strasbourg Preachers to the City Council of Strasbourg

Printed in CorrBucer 3, pp. 224-240, Ep. 216.

[*Summary*]: In response to a submission [by Kautz and Reublin on 15 January; see above, Ep. 377a], the preachers declare that the division between the visible and invisible church is not based on Scripture. The church of the elect is visible and recognizable by the fruit it bears. It is based on the Word of God and on the two sacraments of baptism (of children) and the Lord's Supper (interpreted in the spiritual sense). Kautz does not want ministers of the Word bound by loyalties to any city, but this recommendation applies only to the apostles; their [own] mission is to improve the people of Strasbourg. Kautz accuses the preachers of being unwilling to take up the cross, but only God can judge their intentions. The true fruit of faith is peace; suffering for one's beliefs is not a "fruit of faith" – even Jews and Turks are willing to die for their beliefs. The preachers object at length to the Anabaptists' arguments in favour of adult baptism. Nevertheless, they ask the council to move Kautz and Reublin from prison to a private house to allow them to regain strength. Once they are restored to health, the preachers would like to interrogate them and discuss their beliefs further.