

Letter 236: 6 February [1525, Strasbourg], Capito to Ulrich Zwingli

Printed in ZwBr 2, pp. 299-305, Ep. 362.

[*Summary*]: Jacob Sturm has been appointed assessor [at the *Reichsregiment*]. Luther's letter about Karlstadt has been reprinted in Strasbourg. Capito disapproves of Karlstadt's radical methods. Karlstadt rejects infant baptism while the Strasbourgers support it. Balthasar Hubmaier's reasons for rejecting infant baptism are weak. Capito has read Luther's *Widder die hymelischen propheten, von den bildern und Sacrament* [1525]. He supports retaining images of saints in private homes, "for the sake of reminding us of them." The churches in Strasbourg have been purged of images. Capito will write to Luther within two days [not extant] and counsels Zwingli against challenging the Wittenberg reformer.

Karlstadt has caused commotion in Strasbourg. Capito refers Zwingli to his pamphlet *Was man halten soll* on the controversy between Karlstadt and Luther and to Bucer's writings on the Eucharist [cf. above, Ep. 224]. Certain preachers in Nördlingen and Nürnberg have stirred up unrest. [Johannes Denck], teacher at St. Sebald's in Nürnberg, has been ejected because of his heterodox views on the Trinity. Capito agrees with Zwingli's teaching in principle, even if he disagrees in some details ("I have not read anything of yours of which I disapprove, even if I perhaps think it ought to be phrased a little differently").

The canons who fled Strasbourg [see above, Ep. 233b] have accused the reformers of heresy. [Philip III] of Hanau is calling for a Reformation of the churches in his realm. He has invited Capito, but the city council advises against it, thinking the invitation may be a ruse. The preachers have been consulting about the question of the Eucharist. The Strasbourgers originally interpreted the bread as a sign of the body of Christ but will yield to a consensus of opinions. Capito wrote to Bugenhagen that Zwingli was in agreement with [John] Wycliffe's teaching but told him not to repeat this in public because of possible misunderstandings. The Strasbourg preachers have written to Luther, informing him of their teaching. Capito emphasizes that the question concerns externals and does not aid in obtaining salvation. He does not have much respect for Karlstadt; Luther, however, has interpreted the articles of faith skilfully. "We cannot deny that his vehemence has been very useful." Bucer has translated Luther's postilla on certain gospel passages.