

Letter 273: 23 January 1526, Strasbourg, Capito to Johannes Oecolampadius

Printed in BrOek 1, pp. 453-9, Ep. 327.

[*Summary*]: Capito is reassured by Oecolampadius' three letters [not extant], which he received all at once. Rumours were circulating that Zurich had restored the mass, conspired against the Word of God, pledged their efforts to the Antichrist, and joined forces with [Catholic] Austria. Oecolampadius' letters show that they are false rumours. As long as Zwingli is alive, the Antichrist is powerless in Zurich.

Capito praises Bucer's faith, learning and character. The preachers of Zurich, Basel, and Strasbourg are being drawn into a dispute with [Wittenberg] over the [Eucharist]. Capito urges concord and a united front. He is afraid that Zwingli's treatise, [*Eyn klare underrichtung vom Nachtmahl Christi*, Strasbourg, 1526], will exacerbate the dispute. [Johann] Bugenhagen writes with greater determination on this issue than is appropriate. It is said that Philip [Melanchthon] will contribute to the debate as well. Capito believes that the debate focuses too much on external matters, which are not necessary for salvation. Dissent among the reformers aids the cause of their opponents.

Luther has written a vigorous response [*De servo arbitrio*] to Erasmus' [*De libero arbitrio*]. Regrettably Luther does not seek concord. Capito will not oppose the book if Zwingli agrees with it. Many people appreciate Zwingli's moderate *Ad Ioannis Bugenhagii Pomerani epistolam responsio*.

[Johann] Eck is reported to have made insulting and bragging remarks, but the pamphlet [*libellus*; point of reference unclear] will put an end to them. [Johannes] Fabri may become the next bishop of Basel, and Capito, therefore, advises Oecolampadius to act cautiously. [Theobald] Billicanus' [*De verbis coenae dominicae et opinionum varietate ... ad Urbanum Regium epistola*] and Urbanus [Rhegius'] opinion [*Responsio ... ad eundem*] are being circulated among the Strasbourg reformers.

Capito is sending to Oecolampadius the [*Syngramma*] of the Swabian preachers. If Oecolampadius writes a response, Capito will see to its publication, either in Strasbourg or in Hagenau.¹ Capito has not heard anything about the meeting of the Swabians at Guttenberg [cf. above, Ep. 270]. He comments on [Johannes] Brenz's candour.

[Jacobus] Ceperinus has died. Capito regrets that [Peter Gynoraeus] has been appointed as parish priest of St. Alban's. He is glad that [Conradus] Pellicanus has abandoned the cowl. [Johannes Lüthard], the Franciscan preacher, is left behind but will hardly hold out on his own. Capito expects that the criticism of the Swabians will not upset Oecolampadius too much. Luther has not written against [Andreas] Karlstadt, as far as Capito knows.

The response of the Bern reformers has given Capito hope. He is pleased with the positive news concerning Felix Ulscenius [cf. above, Ep. 254]. As a result of the initiative of the Basel city council, Stephan [Stör; cf. below, Ep. 394] has been captured in Strasbourg. Capito hopes the Strasbourg city council will be merciful to him. Boniface [Wolffhart] is like a brother to Stör.

Capito cannot help out the young man whom Oecolampadius had recommended to him, since there are many in Strasbourg who need patrons. Hartmut von Kronberg, presently in Strasbourg [cf. Ep. 271], will spend some time with Margrave Ernst I [von Baden] at Breisach. Capito and Bucer commend themselves to Zwingli and want to reassure him and Oecolampadius

¹ Oecolampadius' *Antisyngramma* was ultimately printed in Zurich by Froschauer in 1526.

that the rumours of war are vain. The Strasbourg magistracy looks out for its city with great vigilance and trust in God.

Zwingli should send the young son of the provost [i.e. the son of Felix Frei] to the pharmacist in Strasbourg. Capito has written twice about the matter since he had promised the pharmacist thirty gulden to give the young man room and board and instruction for two years [see above, Ep. 272]. [Guillaume] Farel, [Jacques Lefèvre] d'Étaples, Jean Védaste, Simon Robert of Tournai and [Gérard Roussel] are still in Strasbourg and send their greetings. Capito's wife, [Agnes Roettel], pledges her own effort to Oecolampadius.