

Letter 306: 17 October 1526, [Strasbourg], Capito to Ulrich Zwingli

Printed in ZwBr 2, pp. 749-52, Ep. 541.

[*Summary*]: Capito considers it necessary to respond to [Jakob] Strauss' book [i.e. *Wider den unmilten Irrtum Maister Huldreych Zwinglis*, June 1526; see above, Ep. 296] and defend the cause. In the book, Strauss reproaches Zwingli for inconsistency and criticizes him for Latinizing his name, i.e. Zwinglius from Zwingli. Motivated by jealousy, Strauss furthermore took issue with Capito calling Zwingli a minister of Christ, a faithful apostle and a chosen instrument of God. Strauss, who used to be a Dominican, has changed his own name from Friar Jakob to Dr. Jakob Strauss. Leo [Jud] should read the book. He will then see for himself that Strauss is speaking out against scripture and the public peace. Strauss was being held in Eisenach because of his role in the Peasants' War, but thanks to Luther, [John], Duke of Saxony set him free. Strauss reportedly encouraged the rebellious peasants to address the duke as "Brother Hans." In his book he tries to ingratiate himself with the Lutherans by agreeing with their interpretation of the Eucharist. He used to criticize them in the past. Capito asks Zwingli to reply in his customary moderate tone, without sacrificing the truth. He asks that the published book be sent along with a letter to [Philip], Margrave of Baden, requesting that Zwingli and Oecolampadius be authorized to sell their books in his territory. Capito will facilitate the matter.

The Strasbourg preachers are reading Luther's *Sermon [von dem Sakrament des Leibes und Blutes Christi wider die Schwarmgeister]* to dispel any doubts among the brethren about the error of his teachings. One of them reacted by saying: "If he has read what Zwingli and Oecolampadius have written so often, then he is extremely insulting; if he did not read it and therefore condemns what he doesn't know, then he is very arrogant." Nevertheless Luther deserves their consideration, for his teachings about grace, the law and the gospel breathe the Spirit of the Lord; his teachings on the Eucharist, by contrast, breathe the spirit of the flesh. Capito beseeches Zwingli to deal with Luther in a patient and moderate way. The Strasbourg preachers are directing all their energy toward the goal of abolishing the mass. Attention is being drawn once more to public vices [see above, Ep. 303]. In that matter, the Lord is giving the magistrates more strength every day. An [unnamed] brother is inspiring the Strasbourg preachers with even greater admiration for Zwingli. Capito asks Zwingli whether he approves of his responses to Fabri [see Epp. 298, 300 and 300a]. Unfortunately the Diet of Speyer came to a sudden end, which upset Capito's plans to clear his name there. His cause would have been supported by [Jacob Sturm and Philip of Hesse].

Greetings to Leo [Jud] and the other brethren. When Zwingli writes next, he, too, should give his regards to all the Strasbourg preachers. This small courtesy will keep the weak brethren loyal. Zwingli should indicate, however, what is meant for public consumption and what is to be kept private. Capito sends best wishes to Zwingli's wife [Anna Reinhard].