

Letter 334: 9 July 1527, [Strasbourg], Capito to Ulrich Zwingli

Printed in ZwBr 3, pp. 171-2, Ep. 634.

[*Summary*]: A few days earlier, Capito informed Zwingli that his book was well received in Strasbourg, even by their adversaries [see above, Ep. 333]. The Strasbourg city council is considering issuing a decree against the teachings of the Anabaptists [passed 27 July 1527; AST 76]. On 8 July, three Anabaptists were taken into custody. One of them, “a lazy and idle good-for-nothing,” replied as boldly to the magistrate as if he wanted to provoke them into condemning him to death. This was a serious conspiracy against the legitimate magistracy, the ministers of the Word, the authority of scripture and Christ himself, whose merit the Anabaptists openly deny. There are many innocent followers among the Anabaptists, but also many impostors, who pretend to live a holy life and are like [Aesop’s] “ass in the lion’s skin.” There are thieves, adulterers, and conspirators among them, who do not shrink from cursing Christ and the Strasbourg reformers. Capito recently sent Zwingli the articles of Kautz [cf. above, Ep. 332], drawn from [Hans] Denck and [Ludwig] Hätzer. The city of Worms has altogether done away with preaching the Word of God, with the consent of the people [see above, Ep. 333]. Hätzer has caused uproar, and the Strasbourg Anabaptists praise him for it. Capito is upset that the Strasbourg reformers are being misrepresented by the likes of Hätzer and the Anabaptists, but does not want to burden Zwingli with these matters.