

Letter 338: 18 August 1527, Strasbourg, Capito to Ulrich Zwingli

Printed in ZwBr 3, pp. 191-4, Ep. 643.

[*Summary*]: Franz [Zink] delivered Zwingli's letter [now lost]. Capito offered him hospitality, which [Zink] politely refused. Another man arrived as well, but Capito was too busy to converse with either. Michael [Winckler, cf. preceding letter], the merchant from Vienna, has taken out citizenship. Capito is grateful that such a martyr for Christ was recommended to him by Zwingli and is glad to see that he is free of the errors of the Anabaptists. Martin Cellarius is a far better man than rumour has it. Sebastian's [i.e. Hofmeister's?] accusations are groundless. The Wittenbergers are maligning Cellarius. His views on the Eucharist have upset Luther. Cellarius used to have reservations about infant baptism, but has always been firmly opposed to the Anabaptist movement, which he rejects in his book [*De operibus Dei*]. After a week of living with Cellarius, Capito formed the impression that he was a man of God. The Wittenberg theologians speak ill of him, but he does not retaliate. He speaks ill of no one, not even of the Anabaptists, who harass him in Strasbourg. He openly, but patiently, condemns their errors. He has a godly wife [Odilia von Utenheim]. Capito wrote a preface [to Cellarius' *De operibus Dei*, above, Ep. 335] to counter the negative reports about him. Cellarius debated with [Hans] Denck in the presence of [Ludwig] Hätzer. He expounded Denck's book on free will [*Was geredt sei, daß die Schrift sagt, Gott thue und mache Gutes und Böses* (N.p.: n.p. 1526)] in the sense of the apostles. They came to a full agreement. Hätzer, however, continues to criticize Cellarius. Capito writes this to dispel rumours that Cellarius is an Anabaptist. Rather he is a fellow servant of God, who firmly agrees with the Strasbourg preachers on the justice of [Felix] Manz's punishment [see above, Ep. 327]. Capito does not approve of the fact that Cellarius avoided the [Disputation with the Anabaptists in November 1525], when he was still immature and his judgment impaired. Capito asks Zwingli to read Cellarius' *De operibus Dei* and note down the offensive passages. They will undertake to emend those passages. There is great consensus in Strasbourg with regard to infant baptism. The Strasbourg reformers will give their opinion on [Zwingli's] *Elenchus*, which has recently been published. Any disagreement will be expressed with humility. Capito himself preaches to the best of his ability and hopes for divine enlightenment. Rumour has it that Erasmus is working on a response to [Luther's *De servo arbitrio*; ie. the *Hyperaspistes II*]. They say that Luther is preparing to attack Zwingli's position on the Eucharist [in his forthcoming *Bekentnis vom Abendmahl Christi*].