

Letter 623: [c. 24 September 1536], Basel, Capito and Martin Bucer to the Participants at the Colloquy of Basel

The document is edited in BDS 6/1:226–39, no. 17. This is not a letter proper, but an account (*Relation*) of the statement made during the colloquy, which began at Basel on 24 September 1536. It is a follow-up to the *Erläuterung* (= Explanation) given in writing to the Basel emissaries, Simon Grynaeus and Andreas Karlstadt (see above, Ep. 618), and sent together with Ep. 624.

[*Summary*]: Capito and Bucer report on their meeting with the Wittenberg theologians. They state that they did not subscribe to the belief that there is only bread and wine in the Supper; rather, together with bread and wine the body and blood of Christ are distributed to the congregation and benefit only believers. They do not believe in the natural union of the bread with the body of Christ, nor in his local presence. Although they agreed on these points, Luther wanted to draw up articles to be presented for ratification. ‘Thus the articles were signed by the preachers on both sides assembled at Wittenberg. They were to be presented by each of them to their churches and authorities. Thus we wish present and relate these articles to Your Honours and friends, together with an explanation and rationale why they were drawn up in this manner’:

- (1) They believe in the real presence of Christ, but not in a natural union of the bread and body.
- (2) They do not accept transubstantiation or Christ’s local presence, only ‘sacramental union.’
- (3) The efficacy of the sacrament does not depend on the worthiness of the minister. It is given to worthy and unworthy recipients alike, but only believers benefit.

This should be taught to the people in a way they can understand, without getting involved in technical terminology.