

Letter written to Thomas Müntzer
by Johann Wildenauer Egranus,
Zwickau, ca. 16 February 1521

Egranus ¹ to Thomas Müntzer.

I must bear with patience the fact that you made such slanderous references to me last Saturday at the castle and that you speak so insultingly of me when you are with your drinking companions, and even that, when you are in the pulpit ², you demonise me and exclaim over me. Perhaps this is what your spirit teaches you, that spirit which you are so proud of and which (as I hear) you draw up out of the waters. So just you continue as you are, apply both the spurs as hard as you intended and have begun to do. I am ready to meet your next trick – since you have started, you will surely think up another one, for you of course cannot stand idle; who knows what may come of that. You have long wished to crucify me. And since no one else seems willing to do this to me, then go ahead and do it yourself; I am ready to accept it and will not return evil with evil. Just one thing I ask of you for Christ's sake: just start acting according to the truth (which is God himself), so that the simple folk are not led astray. I myself am unconcerned by that. But if that does not please you, then follow your spirit and stick to what you have been doing; if God wills it, I will oppose it neither with words nor with deeds. Whatever I have done so far has always been done in a fraternal manner, perhaps naively wishing to help my brother. But since he seems to have enough understanding from his own spirit, something I had not realised, then clearly I made a mistake. So forgive me and just go ahead and arrange things as you see fit; you will not be obstructed in this by me. May God arrange it for the best. Amen.

It is no accident that I have written to you in German, for I suspect that your spirit despises learning and all literature.

*(Translated by Andy Drummond,
February 2016)*

¹ Johann Wildenauer (or *Sylvanus*) Egranus was a reforming preacher with Humanist tendencies. He took sabbatical leave from St Mary's Church in Zwickau in May 1520, and Müntzer was appointed to stand in for him. He returned to Zwickau in October 1520 and became a *bête noire* for Müntzer.

² St Katherine's Church in Zwickau, to whose pulpit had been appointed in October 1520. This church was also physically close to the castle, and was the church frequented by the weavers of Zwickau.