

**Letter written to the People of Allstedt,
written from Mühlhausen, 15 August 1524**

May the understanding of God's will and the whole knowledge of God be with you, dear brothers.

In my preaching to you, I was not able to restrain myself from scolding the tyrants very severely about the Christian faith, for they use their position in authority to put people in the stocks and pillory to force them to reject the gospel; and besides that, I have also had reason to attack others who presume to defend such godless and damnable people. In truth, I have not been able to do anything more than bark out loudly to warn of the ravening wolf, as is my duty as a true servant of God, John 10, Isaiah 56, Psalms 76 [77]. However, to put it briefly, I have done nothing more than say that a Christian should not sacrifice himself so pitifully on the butcher's block, and to say that if the bigwigs did not allow this, then their authority should be taken away from them. If I have said all in all earnestness to Christians, and yet they take no action on it, out of fear, then what else can I do? Perhaps I should keep quiet about it like some dumb dog? But then why should I earn my living from the pulpit? I have before now said to you all how one should behave in the time of temptation. Perhaps I should just let all this overcome me and suffer death, so that the godless can achieve their goals by exploiting my patience, and afterwards they can say that they have strangled a Satan? No, certainly not! The fear of God in me will not yield to the insolence of another. I have seen such fear in you, when you were reminded of your oaths and responsibilities, that I could not stay with you to be a trouble to you any longer: I would not have been able to keep my lips to be sealed against announcing the righteousness of God, Psalms 39 [40], Isaiah 58. And if anything had happened to you because of me, then you would not have been able to bear it. So be content, for the sake of God's will. I would have wanted to give you succour with letters of comfort, but not once in times of fear have you stood tranquilly – your courage has been unreliable. You wanted to avoid the temptation, but that is impossible in people who are called upon to do good in these times in which we live. So be of good courage: such lessons cannot and will not be preached without the very gravest danger, for Christ himself is a stone of scandal, Psalms 117 [118], Matthew 22, Luke 20, Romans 9, Isaiah 28, 1 Peter 2. This silly and sly clever Christianity will be vexed more than

it ever has been since its beginnings by these improvements which cannot be impeded. So do not regard these improvements as some simple task, as the world does, but rather in the way that Job describes, chapter 28. Because of the circumstances we are in this time, I will take my leave of you amicably and graciously, and will remain at your service in all sincerity, and serve you with unsparing zeal.

But you should not concern yourselves with the threats which you responded to in such a fleshly manner at the castle. Your fear of Man had to show itself, so that I could indeed understand just how much you let yourselves be intimidated by one man: this greatly prevents you from understanding the will of God. I stressed this very point to you so strongly that you might understand it and I pointed it out only for your benefit. I will remain on the most amicable terms with you if you will but allow it. But if not (may God forbid it in eternity !) then for his name's sake I must let him wreak his vengeance on the wicked for the improvement of the good.

I wanted the Mass-books and Vesper-books to be sent on to Mühlhausen ¹. I will follow this up with all my power, for the people here are willing to adopt them. Please take every step to make peace amongst yourselves, and allow me to stay with other people until the church, after passing through the fire of vexation, is established. I will write further to you and the congregation, but at present I have no time. God be with you, my dearest companions in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I ask that you should give my wife a small allowance, if that does not annoy you, however much you like. I did not preach for money, only to seek out God's name, may he protect you always. Amen.

Written from Mühlhausen on the day of the Assumption of Mary, *anno domini* 1524.

Thomas Müntzer, a servant of God.

(Translated by Andy Drummond,
February 2016)

¹ This refers to Müntzer's *German Evangelical Mass* and *German Church Office* books – either physical copies of those, or possibly the type which would allow him to re-print them.