

**Letter written to Allstedt,
written from Mühlhausen, 26 or 27 April 1525**

This letter was written by Müntzer, in an attempt to persuade his former parishioners in Allstedt to join in the broader Thuringian uprising. The handwritten original has not been preserved, although contemporary handwritten copies exist. It was printed by Martin Luther as part of his pamphlet 'Eyn Schrecklich geschicht ... Thomas Müntzers', which appeared in late May 1525, and ran to at least four editions that year, with many more in the years to come.

May the pure fear of God be with you, dear brothers. How much longer will you sleep, how much longer will you resist God's Will because you think He has forsaken you? Oh, how often have I told you how it must be: God cannot reveal himself unless you stand in tranquillity. If you do not do so, then your sacrifice, your heart-saddening suffering of the heart, is all in vain: you will have to start all over again and recommence your suffering. I tell you: if you are not willing to suffer for the sake of God, then you will become martyrs of the Devil. So take good care, do not be so downcast or neglectful, and stop flattering those perverted fantasists, those godless evil-doers, but rather begin now and fight the Lord's fight! It is high time, make sure all your brothers do not mock God's testimony, or else they will be lost. The whole German, French and Italian lands ¹ are up in arms, the master will have his game, the evil-doers will have to take care. In Fulda in Easter week, four abbeys were laid waste, the peasants of Klettgau and Hegau in the Black Forest have risen, three times one thousand strong ², and the army is growing ever greater. My only worry is that the foolish people will accept some false peace-treaty, because they cannot recognise the harm that could be done.

¹ 'Das gantze deutsche, frantzosisch und welsch land' – the 'welsch' refers generally to Italian Switzerland. But there were no peasant uprisings outside of German territory at this time.

² In Martin Luther's pamphlet 'A Terrible History and Judgement of God on Thomas Müntzer' (*Eyn Schrecklich geschicht...*) this phrase about the number of peasants in arms was here multiplied to 'three times one hundred thousand'; the actual number may have been around 100,000. (See Martin Luther - *Werke*, Vol.18, Weimar 1908, pp.362ff)

Even if there are only three of you who stand tranquil in God and seek only his name and honour, then you will not fear a hundred thousand. So: on, on, onwards ! It is time, the evil-doers are running scared like dogs. Alert your brothers so that they may be at peace and give testimony of their change of heart. It is utterly and completely necessary. On, on, onwards ! Do not show pity, even though Esau comes to you speaking with kind words, Genesis 33. Take no heed of the cries of the godless, for they will come to you amicably, entreating, whining and begging like children. Do not let yourselves show pity, as God commanded us through Moses, Deuteronomy 7 (and he has revealed these things to us as well.) Stir it up in the villages and especially amongst the miners and other good fellows who will be useful. We must sleep no longer.

Look, just as I was writing these words, a messenger came to me from Salza, saying that the people there wanted to lay hands on the administrator of Duke Georg ³ because he had secretly wanted to kill three of them. The peasants of the Eichsfeld have taken hostile action against their Junkers and wish to show them no mercy. There are many things like that which should give you an idea what to do. You must set to it, onwards, for it is time. Balthasar and Barthel Krump, Valentin and Bischoff all lead the way in the dance ⁴. Get this letter out to the miners. I have been told that my printer is expected here in the next few days. ⁵ There is nothing else I can do just now, otherwise I should really want to instruct the brothers so thoroughly that their hearts would grow far bigger than all the castles and defences on earth belonging to the godless evil-doers.

On, on, onwards, for the fire is hot! Do not let your sword grow cold, ⁶do not let it hang loose in your hands! Smite cling clang on the anvil of Nimrod; cast down their towers! As long as they live, it is not possible to be emptied of the fear of man. You can be told nothing about God as long as they rule over you. On, onwards, while you have daylight.

³ Sittich von Berlepsch.

⁴ Bartel Krumpfe, Bartel Zimmermann, Valentin Krumpe - in his 'Confession' of May 1525, these people are mentioned as the ring-leaders of the Allstedt League. Bischoff was a preacher in the small nearby town of Wolferode.

⁵ This could possibly be the man who had printed Müntzer's Allstedt pamphlets, Nikolaus Widemar. But that is by no means certain. The printer probably did arrive in Mühlhausen, but he never printed anything.

⁶ Luther's reprint of the handwritten letter adds "with blood" after "grow cold".

God marches before you, so follow, follow ! The story is already written in Matthew 24, Ezekiel 34, Daniel 7, Ezra 16, Revelations 6, and all these are explained in Romans 15.

So do not let yourself be daunted. God is with you, as is written in 2 Chronicles 20, where God says: 'You should not be afraid. You should not shrink back from this great host, for it is not your fight but the Lord's. It is not you who fight, so stand firm like men. You will behold the help of God.' When Jehoshaphat heard these words, he fell to the ground. Thus must you also, with the help of God who will strengthen you in the true belief without the fear of Man. Amen.

Written at Mühlhausen in 1525.

Thomas Müntzer, a servant of God against the godless.

*(Translated by Andy Drummond,
February 2016)*

Original German text available at pages 403-415 of:
Thomas Müntzer: Briefwechsel,
edited by S. Bräuer and M. Kobuch, Leipzig 2010