

PROTESTATION OR PROPOSITION ¹



This pamphlet was printed in early 1524 by Nikolaus Widemar of Eilenburg (although it prints the place of publication as 'Allstedt'). The original edition ran to 17 pages. The cover bears a large woodcut, with the words 'Alstedt MDXXIII' on it, and the Allstedt coat of arms held by a 'wild man'.

Protestation or Proposition
of Thomas Müntzer of Stolberg in the Harz,
now Pastor at Allstedt,
Concerning his Doctrine
and the Beginning of the True Christian Belief
and of Baptism
1524
Listen World !
For the new year
I preach to you Jesus Christ, who was crucified,
And you and me with him.
If it pleases you, accept it; if not, reject it !
Allstedt MDXXIII

Firstly

I, Thomas Müntzer of Stolberg in the Harz, a servant of the living son of God in the unchangeable will and steadfast mercy of God the father, greet all you elect friends of God in the holy spirit. I present you with the pure and righteous fear of the Lord and the peace which is opposed to the world. After the all-knowing and watchful head of the household made you as pure ears of corn and planted you in fertile and productive soil, you have now - let us raise a pitiful lament to God ! - become little different from the weeds and thistles. For the godless sons of

¹ Original German title: *Protestation odder empietung*. Translated by Peter Matheson as *A Protestation or Proposition* (Peter Matheson: The Collected Works of Thomas Müntzer. Edinburgh 1988)

secretive, wily rascality shine forth far more brightly than you, and soar so high over you that your miserable and pitiful sighing about the haughty showiness of the red blooming roses and the cornflowers and even the prickly thistles has become transformed into an abhorrent phantom and a ridiculous mockery, and has been completely uprooted; yet this very heartfelt sighing and striving towards God's eternal will is an incontestable sign of true apostolic Christianity, for it bubbles up like the living waters from the hard rocks, the beginning and origin of the elect. There cannot be, there may not be, any other way to come to the aid of miserable, poor, pitiable, needy, coarse, ruined Christianity than for the elect to be guided to this position through ardent desire, labour and unstinting sweat.

Secondly

Unless all this is undertaken, then the Christian church will remain deranged and unreasonable – more so than even the raging madness which prevails among all the people of the earth, which in our times can be seen as more unclean and pig-headed than it ever has been since the beginning of time, for all the cunning spitefulness and all the honey-sweet rascality has now reached a high-point, covering itself sometimes with fraudulent faith, sometimes with hypocritical works, and it has decked itself out so splendidly that more creatures are swallowed up every year, just like the scoundrels who are cast into hell. And the elect are being treated in the same way.

Thirdly

If we do not first recognise the damage done to a mindless world, and all its causes, then it will be impossible for our judicious father to apply his merciful rod. For the heartfelt truth must liberate all those elected by God and who have brought down all such intolerable damage upon the Christian community. That is why it is an abhorrent abomination when one sits in the holy place of God and a child must live without any discipline, as free as a beast in the field; the only comfort which can be offered to the miserable church is that the elect should - indeed must - become Christ-like, promoting God's work through suffering and discipline.

Fourthly

And in the same way, we must first and foremost consider how we Christians have turned into such stubborn people that our dear Christian faith has become a frivolous thing which profits us not at all. In reality, we are so boastful, ready to write lofty great books full of blots, saying: I believe, I believe !; and yet we spend our days in idle squabbles, concerned for worldly goods, and day by day become more greedy; we say, I believe, and think that all of our Christian faith is quite right, and we have a really firm, strong hope in God etc. O dear fellow, you do not know whether you are saying yes or no. You have not let God dig out even the smallest thistle or thorn in you. Do you not believe that? Then, for certain, your faith in higher things is fraudulent. You are untrue and duplicitous in the small things, so how could you be trusted with the greatest thing of all?

Fifthly

You daughter of Zion, look back and see how you and your followers behaved many years ago in the time of the apostles, when you took resolute steps to ensure that the enemy, the opponent of all pious people, could not spread weeds in the fields of corn; that is why only adults were taken up as members of the church after long instruction, and were called 'catechumens' because of the teaching. There was no such superstition as now, which relies more on holy symbols than on the inner essence. Oh, what can I say? Not a single book of the Church teachers has proved since they began to be written, not a single thought has been expressed, to show me where the holy scriptures state that a single immature child was baptised by Christ and his disciples, nor is it shown anywhere that we should baptise our children in this way now. Aye, even though you make such a noise about it all, you will not find that Mary, the mother of God, and the disciples were ever baptised in water. If our salvation was based on this, then we would content with a honey-sweet Christ; we might as well pour good malmsey or wine over ourselves, rather than water, and keep ourselves in ignorance.

Sixthly

Since baptism is not correctly understood, then our entry into Christianity has become just a dumb farce. The scholars have built upon a foundation of sand, and our miserable, grieving mother, dear Christianity, has been completely deceived. Picking the texts out in a fragmentary way, the scholar said, John 8 ²: “He who is not baptised in water and the holy spirit will never come into the kingdom of God.” These words are quite true of course, but their entire significance has been concealed, along with the entire gospel of John. For the knowledge of God must be proven from the holy scriptures using a strict comparison of every word, those written down in both the Old and New testaments, 1 Corinthians 2. In truth, our scholars have not opened their eyes completely, they have imagined that the third chapter of John is not connected to the seventh, where the voice of truth says: “If anyone is thirsty, he should come to me and drink. For he who believes in me, so the scriptures say, will find that torrents of living water will flow from his body.” That is what he said about the holy spirit which in future the faithful will receive. So just take a good look, dear fellow, the writer of the gospel explains himself: he speaks about the waters just as the prophets did, for the waters are the movement of God’s spirit within us, as John explained in chapter one by referring to Isaiah. But in his second chapter these waters in us turn to wine. Our movement begins to desire suffering. In the third chapter, John baptises where there is a lot of water, a lot of movement, until the voice of the bridegroom can be heard and understood. In the fourth chapter, they bubble up from the ground in the fountain of life. In the fifth, John voices agreement with all the prophets concerning the movement of the water. In the sixth, after the waves of the storm have subsided, the true son of God is seen walking upon the waters. Consistent with this explanation, the seventh chapter agrees with the third and the third with all the others. Nicodemus was moved by signs to come to Christ, who called his attention to the water, as he did for other

² In comparison with many of Müntzer’s works, this pamphlet seems devoid of Biblical citations. However, in Müntzer’s three Allstedt pamphlets of 1523/24, the citations were not contained within the main body of the text, but festoon the margins. For reasons of simplicity, the marginalia have not been reproduced here.

scholars as well. Such is the significance of Jonah as well, even if this greatly annoys them.

Seventhly

So have a good look now and see if you can place your feet on firm ground; for in the church, everything rests on a muddy, sandy broth which quivers and bubbles under you. This is the cause of all the obstacles faced by the elect, which have flourished along with all the other heathen ceremonies and rites, creating a complete abomination in the holy place. When they turned immature children into Christians, and did away with catechumens, Christians were turned back into children, which Paul expressly forbade, for it was then that all understanding disappeared from the church. Then true baptism was buried under the wearisome, hypocritical idea of godparents, which people praised ever so pompously and hung on to like a dog and his sausage. Ah, that is a soup which not even Cerberus could swallow ! Then along came the loose woman in her scarlet dress, the shedder of blood, the Roman church, and severed herself from all the other churches and judged her own ceremonies and rites to be the best - even though they had been cobbled together from heathen beliefs - and all the others to be an abhorrent abomination. Oh, I am in so much pain that I can hardly speak ! The whole of Asia was excommunicated, handed over to the devil as is the custom of worldly people – all on account of some childish squabble over the church-fathers there celebrating Easter on the fourteenth day of April. The Romans dealt with everyone else in the same way, and left the whole world in most terrible desolation all because of their nasty broth and their pettiness, and so separated the rest of the world from our fellowship. Oh, but it is a pitiful thing that the very lands which the apostles won with their own dear blood should have been consigned to the devil over such trifling rites ! God has therefore blinded us more than any other people and allowed us to stray into mighty error. Our

ignorance about baptism arises because we are concerned only with ceremonies and church-rites.

Eighthly

The Romans and other sects brought the Christian faith to us Germans almost last of all. From the very beginning, they told us that all sects were to be despised; and now we hold all sects in suspicion without having any good reason. And because of those despicable quarrels which we had, it became quite common for us not to spare a single thought as to the origin of faith in our hearts. I say quite openly, from pity and not from scorn, that not one doctor of the church let us have even the slightest peep at this. And so our good head of household has abandoned his precious fields to so many weeds – aye, even to great stumps of trees. If our forefathers had read Isaiah chapter 5, they would perhaps have got a scent of the truth. Since – this much is certain – since the mighty God of hosts allows errors and heresy to emerge, he shows us that the people do not increase their faith and that they have a devious and wily faith. How can they condemn the heretics when they themselves have not been forged in the fires of faith? The son of God says that when he sends the holy spirit, then he will certainly punish the world for its lack of faith. Since they do not wish to recognise this in themselves, they choose to see it in others who are obviously unbelievers, whether they want to or not. For just as in our eyes they are people who have fallen into error, exactly so are we in the eyes of God. Because we think that we are quite healthy in our faith, we imagine that we do not need a doctor; and God just keeps heaving one illness after another at us. We wander about in this blindness and ignorance, and yet we choose not to believe anyone who tells us that we are blind, so blind.

Ninthly

Dearest brothers, if our eyes are to be opened, then we must first recognise our blindness, which shows itself especially in our fraudulent faith and the hypocritical works which it encourages. We must not do as the scholars did, John 9, when the miracle of the blind man revealed their stubborn ignorance, when they said: “We know that God spoke with Moses”; it is the same now, dear brothers, when our scholars say: “We know that the scripture is right.” It is true that it is right – right to kill you and not to bring you to life. That is not why it was brought down to the world; it was written for us ignorant people, so that the holy faith of the mustard-seed would taste as bitter to everyone as if there had been no scripture at all, bringing a mighty and unavoidable amazement. Am I to accept the scripture just because the church accepts its outward appearance; am I to have no further knowledge of the origin of faith? What good would that do me? I need to look all round me, over the whole circumference of the earth, observe all nations. Then I would understand that the heathens also believe that their gods are pious saints subject to the highest god. And the Turks praise their Mohammed just as highly as we praise our Christ. And the Jews, at least in appearance, have a more solid basis for belief than other ignorant and impulsive people, for they quarrel with others only about the scriptures (which is a profitable quarrel); we alone quarrel about honour and worldly goods. The tradition of the Jews goes back four thousand years; we, however, draft a new law every day, which we only obey if it brings us money or honour, until such time as we can ignore it altogether. For all our laws have one faltering tune to them: *Expiravit*³ They help their brothers; we steal from our brothers and no one is as dear to us as ourselves. My dearest brothers, I speak the truth out of friendship (although it is a bitter herb to our unaccustomed taste): we Christians throughout the world have slurped up those foul dregs with such greediness that even we are sickened by the horrible and unrecognisable stink now coming from our mouths.

Tenthly

³ Latin: it has expired.

Let us firstly have a close look at the beliefs of the intelligent heathen. We find that they believe in an immoveable god, and that all pious people who do some special good for the world will become companions of God, just as we, in our way, consider our saints. Delicate plants that we are, however, we cannot bear to suffer, and we cry out in our times of need to our saints; in doing so, we claim not to be heathens, but Christians. What this means, as is obvious, is that many decent people will lose their heads before we come to recognise our wickedness.

Eleventhly

If I then have a good look at the Turks, then I will find in the Koran, which Mohammed wrote, that Jesus of Nazareth was the son of a pure virgin; but (he goes on to say) it is not true that he was nailed to a cross. The reason: the one almighty God is far too mild to permit such a thing to be done by wicked people. So (he says) God remained loyal by exchanging Jesus with a criminal, who was then crucified, and the stupid people were thereby deceived, since they did not recognise the omnipotence of God. See, you miserable false brother, isn't the whole world now deceiving itself quite beautifully this same fantastical, sensual spirit, even though it likes to decorate itself elegantly with the holy scripture. We make a great fuss about the faith of the prophets and apostles, which was gained through great pain, and all we have to do is stuff ourselves full of it. Oh, dear sirs, stop now, cast the jars of powders and paints to the devil, do not paint yourselves like Jezebel who once strangled Naboth. She is not yet completely devoured by the dogs, she lives still, aye, a hard life torturing the servants of God.

Twelfthly

Dear Christians, we should first of all grab ourselves by the nose and see whether we don't resemble the heathen. The heathen pray to Lady Venus, Juno etc, in order to have healthy children and not suffer pains during birth, and then they have other gods as well – and in the same way we call on the mother of God, and honour her conception and then we summon St Margaret, contrary to the text of the scriptures:

“You should bear your children in pain”; and we never think that we conceived our children in the fear of God. Do you not see that all our life is spent in open idolatry, raging against the justness of the will of God? And still we neither wish to see, nor can we see. As a result, faith in God, as it has been taught by disloyal scholars, is these days are becoming more and more nonsensical than it ever has been (God weeps!) For the same reason, we have become just as proud as our opponents and are quite prepared to throw someone instantly to the dogs if he does not completely agree with us. This is caused by our great arrogance. Because many people do not recognise the works of God, they think that they can so easily become good Christians just by thinking about what Christ said. Oh no, my dear fellow, you must suffer patiently and come to know how God himself uproots the weeds, thistles and thorns from the ploughed field that is your heart; otherwise nothing good will grow there except the raging devil who appears swathed in light, and beautiful corn-cockles etc. You cannot be helped, even if you have swallowed down all the scriptures; you must suffer the sharp blade of the ploughshare. You will have no faith unless God himself gives it to you and teaches you. If that happens, dear scholars, then at first the book will be closed to you; and neither reasoning nor any creature can open it again for you, even if you were to burst. God must gird up your loins, aye, you must let God cast off all the worldly clothing which you have been wearing, and you must not do as the clever people do, take one piece of text here, another there, without making a solid comparison with the entire spirit of the scriptures. Otherwise you will have confused the window with the door. Even if we choose one suitable piece of text, it will be quite inadequate if we do not read the text that lies next to it. To take an example: if one says that Christ has accomplished everything on his own – that is completely insufficient. If you do not consider both the head and the limbs, how can you follow in his footsteps? Well, I suppose you can, if you are wearing a nice warm fur, or sit on a cushion made of silk.

Thirteenthly

The Romans gave out indulgences, and pardoned penalties and guilt - and now we are supposed to build on such a foundation? That would be just as if we

whitewashed a tumbledown house and called it new. But that is exactly what we do if we preach a honey-sweet Christ that is pleasing to our murderous nature. Aye, if we didn't have to suffer anything and it was all for free, would we ever achieve anything? We would just be blowing a tune in the same pipes as the Turk. He denies the history of Christ our saviour; we too want to deny this secretly, aye, thievishly, so that we do not have to suffer and can let the corn and the thorns flourish prettily side by side. Oh no, dear brothers, that is not the right way to live, it is contrary to the clear texts of Matthew 7, 1 Peter 2, John 2 and John 14, even if it is well pleasing to our nature, as I have indicated above. In short, we must follow the narrow way in which all the scripture is to be studied not according to appearances but rather according to the dearest will of God in his living word; and we must experience it in every assault on our faith, as Christ himself says in the aforementioned seventh chapter [*of Matthen*]. Only then will a man become aware that his house – that is, himself – has been built upon an immovable rock. St Peter (and we with him) did not understand such a firm foundation, and although he was built upon rock, he too had to fall for he was not solidly constructed on all sides. His faith did not weaken as a result of this fall – on the contrary, it grew considerably, for after the fall he recognised his presumption and only then did he become steadfast. But we must behold the truth, that the apostles and all the prophets could not withstand the words of God until all the weeds and presumption of a fraudulent faith had been uprooted and cleared away. We scholars like to suppose that it is enough to have the scriptures and that we do not need to be aware of the power of God, although Romans 1 says clearly that the gospel is a power of God; aye, and so it is to those from whom it has not been hidden; for I have to know whether something was said by God or by the devil; I must be able to distinguish between the work of both of them in the depths of my soul. If I do not do this, then I will be blown one way or the other, as in the veering winds, just like the untested scholars and others, Matthew 7. Their talk does not have the power of God, for they say quite brazenly that they have no other faith or spirit than the one which they have stolen from the scriptures. But of course they do not call it 'stolen', they call it 'believed'. The light of nature has such a high opinion of itself that it believes that faith can be so simply achieved.

Fourteenthly

We miss the mark completely if we preach that faith, and not works, must make us righteous. That is a shameless way of talking. For it does not confront one's nature with the fact that man comes to faith only through the working of God, something he must await above and before all things. Faith is otherwise not worth a trifle and, if based on our actions alone, is fraudulent from top to bottom. We have to say how a person feels when they are poor in spirit, and confirm this with the evidence of the tribulations of the fathers from, and in, the Bible. For God, with all his written promises, reveals how his almighty power has been at work in all his elect. By placing all the words next to each other, the whole context is revealed and the deceitful theft of the scripture will be banished.

Fifteenthly

Dear brothers, I have proposed my conditions and made my petition to you at some length and in a number of ways because I know quite well (for God's sake, you must forgive me) that, at the moment, you have no intention of accepting faith or doing righteous works, since those who preach the gospel prize faith above all things. That is what the self-important light of nature wishes to imagine. Oh, if it was merely a question of believing, how easy it would be to achieve it ! Nature goes on to say: aye, for sure, you are born of Christian parents, you have never fallen into doubt, so you will easily stand firm. Aye, aye: I am a good Christian. Oh, is it really possible to come to salvation so easily? Shame, shame on those priests ! Oh, those accursed people, how bitter have they made things for me etc. And then people think they can be saved by veering about with the wind, and never read nor listen from start to finish to anything written about faith or about works; they just want to be good evangelical folk by using a torrent of boastful words. That is a mighty, coarse and oafish error. If only we could recognise it as such ! But there are still many people who find this useful as a fig-leaf for their immodest lives.

Sixteenthly

But in contrast, there are now a number of honest people who do not allow their consciences to be satisfied with such idle chatter, who recognise and discover truly that the path to heaven is none other than a narrow one and that one cannot set foot on it by means of fleshly enjoyment; but unfortunately they fall right over into a hedge of thorns, that is, into heathen ceremonies or rites, with a lot of fasting and praying etc, and then they think they've hit upon the answer. Oho, there is no help for people like that who are contented thus, who do not wish to be shaken about or stretch themselves any more; these ones become haughty devils and are the worst of the damned. But those who manage to gnaw their way through fraudulent faith and through outward works, as the very worst sinners do with their criminal behaviour, they will see that the word on which true faith depends is not a hundred thousand miles away from them; on the contrary, they will see that it bubbles up from the abyss of the heart, and will realise that it has its source in the living God. They will be fully aware that they have to remain sober, to abandon all lusts and to expend the greatest effort in awaiting those words and promises from God. For a person does not have faith because he has heard it from other people. It is all one to him whether the whole world accepts it or rejects it, as is witnessed in John chapter 4. But his inward eyes have been waiting for a long, long time upon the Lord and his hands, that is, for the working of God, and his instruction will last until the whole harvest of the spirit has been exhausted. This is how we must become ready for the unwavering mercy of God.

Seventeenthly

A zealous expectation of the word is the first stage in becoming a Christian. This same expectation must first suffer the word and there must be no comfort in being promised eternal forgiveness because of our works. It is then that a person thinks he has no faith at all. Aye, he thinks he has no faith at all within him. He feels and finds a pressing need for true faith, but it is so weak that he is barely aware of it, and only then after the greatest difficulty. And finally he has to break out and say: "Oh,

how miserable I am, what is going on in my heart? My conscience is devouring my juices and my strength and everything that I am. Oh, what am I to do? I am losing my mind, I have no comfort from either God or creature. God tortures me with my conscience, with disbelief, with despair and I blaspheme against him. Outwardly I am assailed by sickness, poverty, distress and every kind of need, by evil people etc. And inwardly it is even worse than that. Oh, how gladly would I embrace true faith, for everything seems to depend on it; if only I knew what was the right way. Aye, I would follow it to the end of the world.” And then along come the pious scholars, if ever such dismal folk come at all (only the best of them) and they say: “Dear, honourable, venerable, most learned sir” and similar rubbish. “Ah, I am a poor man and have become mad. I do not believe in God or creature any more. Things are so bad with me that I don’t know whether I prefer to be dead or alive. For God’s sake give me some good advice, for I am very much afraid that I fallen into the hands of the devil.” And then the scholars, really annoyed that they have to open their mouths, for every word should cost a tidy sum, they say: “Ha, my dear man, if you cannot believe, then go to the devil !” And then the poor creature replies: “Oh, most learned doctor, I would really like to believe, but my lack of faith overwhelms all my intentions. What in the world am I supposed to do?” But then the scholar says: “Well, my dear fellow, you should not bother yourself with such lofty things. All you need do is believe. Put those thoughts away. That is all idle fantasy. Go on home and be cheerful – that’s the way to forget all these cares.” See, dear brother, that is the kind of comfort which has prevailed in the church, that and no other. That same comfort has turned all Christian earnestness into an abomination.

Eighteenthly

When a decent Christian begins to fear that his head will become senseless and foolish on account of such sharp bitter thoughts and fearful misery, then his nature will become exceedingly suspicious. Is this not the first hint of disbelief, that you cannot trust your gracious, kind creator to keep you from losing your head? Here we see our lack of faith most clearly. If we scholars are to pursue such things, then we must make better use of our heads. So the neglectful scholar says: “Yes, well, if you

present such lofty doctrine to the people, then of course they will go mad and lose their senses.” They then say: “Christ says that one should not cast before swine. What use is such splendidly spiritual teaching to the poor coarse people? That is something only for scholars to know about.” Oh no, no, no. dear *domine* ! St Peter tells you who the fatted pigs are: they are all the disloyal, false scholars, regardless of which sect they belong to, who consider it right to gobble and slurp and who follow all their lusts in high living and gnash their sharp teeth like dogs if anyone says a word against them.

Nineteenthly

Christ calls these same fatted pigs false prophets who cannot remove the beam from their own eye, let alone the eyes of others. They turn the narrow path into a wide one. They call sweet things bitter, light they call darkness, Isaiah 5. In their own eyes they are oh so clever, but I beg them for God’s sake to refrain from their impudence. What they should preach, with great terror, is something that they themselves have never experienced, they should believe that God has many, many of his own among the infants, who will in future spread his name far and wide. In the eyes of the world all who do that will be treated, as Christ was, like worms to be squashed in the puddles; they will not act as did the messengers from Gadarene, who asked the Lord to leave their land, even if he had only come there to offer his word to the needy, for they wanted to receive it without any impairment to their lusts. All of which is impossible. And so, dear brothers, if people mean well and deal well with us, then we should not consider this to be a great insult, as the stinging hornet ⁴ or a great bluebottle might do, but should rather reflect on the proverb of Solomon: “the wounds of the lover are sweeter than the kisses of a deceiver.” And the prophet also says: “O my people, those who call you holy and good do but deceive you.” A clever man who has been punished will improve himself. A fool or an idiot will pay no attention to words of wisdom: he will only hear what he wants to hear. So, dear brothers, may the merciful God watch over you forever. Amen.

⁴ The German text here reads *hornaffe* (lit. horned ape). The word exercises scholars of Müntzer. A ‘horned-ape’ is not a known animal, now or in 16th Century bestiaries. It could be a misprint for, or a variant of, *hornisse* or *hornusse*: hornet (my thanks to Dr John Flood for this suggestion). The word is also a 16th century name for a type of pretzel-shaped bread or cake; clearly, not relevant here. My own view is that it is a jocular piece of rhyming-slang, referencing a popular pastry to describe a hornet.

Twentiethly

In summary: in this petition, this my set of conditions, I have described the damage done to the church by a misunderstood baptism and a fraudulent faith. If I am wrong in this matter, then I am quite prepared to have this pointed out to me before an impartial congregation, but not in some dark corner without sufficient witnesses, but in the full light of day. With this undertaking of mine, I want to place the teaching of evangelical preachers on a better footing, and yet not despise our backward, slow Roman brothers. All I ask is that I be judged before the whole world and not in a dark corner somewhere. For this I pledge my body and soul, with no recourse to any wily human defenders, through Jesus Christ, the true son of God. May he guard you forever. Amen.

Twenty-Firstly

There were important reasons for me to publish my petition. The old foot-rag must be hung on the shaft of the cross ⁵, lest the teaching of Christ should suffer from my intervention. If anyone can find fault with this, then please write to me in the spirit of friendship, and I will give him full measure in my reply, so that none will judge without good cause. May Jesus Christ, the gentle son of God who takes us as his brothers, aid us in this. Amen.

Twenty-Secondly

I wish to provide evidence for my petition and I would be pleased if those of you who are as yet untested did not wrinkle your noses in mockery, but rather heard me along with my opponents before all peoples and all beliefs. If you want me to name

⁵ The foot-rag (or foot-cloth) – like the worm in the 19th paragraph - is an analogy for someone treated with absolute contempt, much as Müntzer saw himself treated. Peter Matheson, in his critical English translation, provides further detail on this (p.208). The exact meaning of the imagery of hanging this rag on to the cross remains slightly obscure, although the general intention is clear.

a price for this, then my poor body is all I can offer. But do not be over-hasty in judging me, for the sake of the mercy of God. Amen.

Finis

*(Translated by Andy Drummond,
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