

**Letter written to Count Ernst of Mansfeld,
Frankenhausen,
12 May 1525**

Open letter to brother Ernst at Heldringen, that he might change his ways.

The outstretched power, the firm fear of God and the solid ground of his righteous will be with you, brother Ernst. I, Thomas Müntzer, sometime preacher at Allstedt, give you warning – even though it may be unnecessary – that, for the sake of the living God, you should abandon your tyrannical raging. You must not let the wrath of God hang over you any longer. It was you who began to martyr Christians, it was you who slandered the holy Christian faith as villainy, it was you who had the impudence to uproot Christians. Now tell us, you miserable, wretched sack of maggots – who made you into a prince over the people whom God redeemed with his own precious blood? You should and you must prove whether you are a true Christian; you should and you must demonstrate your faith, as 1 Peter 3 commands. I give you my honest word that you will have a genuine safe-conduct so that you may publicly confirm your faith: our whole community, standing in a ring, has promised you this. You must also repent of your blatant tyranny, you must tell us who made you so foolish that you became such a wicked heathen to the disadvantage of all Christians, all the while claiming to be Christian yourself. But if you stay away and will not do as we have urged you to do, then I will denounce you before the whole world with upraised voice, and every brother will be prepared to spill their own blood to fight you, as if you were the Turk. Then you will be hunted down and rooted out, for every man will be far keener to gain an indulgence at your expense than any indulgence that the Pope ever offered. We do not know how we can otherwise bring you to justice. You have no sense of shame; God has made you obdurate like the King Pharaoh, and like those kings which God himself wanted to obliterate, Joshua 5 and 11. Let us lament to God for evermore that the world did not recognise your coarse tyranny before now, when you raged like a bull. How was it possible that you could inflict so much astonishing damage? How can anyone but God himself have mercy on you? In short, you will be destroyed by God's mighty power. If you will not humble yourself before those of low standing, then you will be eternally shamed in the eyes of all Christendom, and you will become a martyr for the devil.

So that you know also that we have been given our orders, I say this to you: the eternal living God has commanded that you be cast down from your throne by the power that has been given to us; for you are of no use to Christianity, you are a pernicious scourge of the friends of God. God has spoken of you and your like, Ezekiel 14 and 39, Daniel 7, Micah 3. Obadiah the prophet says that your nest must be ripped apart and destroyed utterly. We want to have your answer by this evening, or else we will hunt you down in the name of the God of hosts. So you know what to expect. We will not hesitate to carry out what God has commanded us to do. So do your best, too. I am coming for you.

Written at Frankenhausen, Friday after Jubilate, Anno Domini 1525.

Thomas Müntzer with the Sword of Gideon.

*(Translated by Andy Drummond,
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