

But they hadn't. One day as they went through the forest near the town of Eisenach where Luther had lived as a little boy, suddenly some horsemen came out of the woods and attacked the wagons there, one of which Luther was. They attacked them, knocked out the men driving the horses and who were protecting Luther. Seized Luther, put him on a horse and they dashed off and ~~xxxx~~ rode around in the woods all day long. Then after dark they took him into the Castle of Wartburg, high on the hill overlooking Eisenach.

There they called him knight George. They made out he was a knight. They did not let anybody see him and he was stuck there for months. Nobody knew where he was but he was able to carry on correspondence. What would you or I do in such a situation? We'd say, How soon can we get away from here? Is there someone who is going to come and get me, and kill me? Is there something of trouble ahead? But Luther set to work to translate the NT into German and he worked day after day. He worked so hard his health began to suffer when he worked so steadily at that task.

Then when his health began to trouble him, they began to take him out on rides but they kept it absolutely secret where he was. Then Luther heard things were going bad. In Wittenberg people were taking Luther's teaching and carrying it to an extreme. One of Luther's associates, a man named Carlstat, read in the Scripture: Thank God you have hidden these things from the wise and revealed them unto babes. So he said, If I want to know the answer, I should look for a babe to give me the answer. So he'd go down the street and see an ignorant man and say, Can you tell me what these Greek words here mean? The man didn't know any Greek.

Some were saying, Luther said these things in the church are wrong, what about this? What about this? They began knocking over things and disrupting things with some doing this and some doing that and things got into such a mess that ~~the/Emperors/kings/~~ everybody knew if they went much further, the Emperor Charles would come with an army and wipe the whole thing out. Duke Frederick wrote to Luther and said, Can you write me something that I can give to the people? and try to quiet them. Luther did the best he could in writing, but his writing didn't carry it. Luther wrote (Frederick) and said I am going back to Wittenberg. Frederick wrote and said, Don't do it; I can't protect you; they'll destroy you. Luther wrote him and said, I am very grateful for the way you have protected me and for all you have done, but I absolve you of any responsibility for what may happen to me. He said, I'm going back to Wittenberg in order to straighten this thing out and to present the Gospel.

So Luther in his guise as a monk made his way back to Wittenberg. Luther knew that he could be seized, and if so he would be burned. But in the providence of God he was protected. In succeeding years Luther wrote book after book. He preached sermon after sermon. He worked day and night to present the Gospel. Never knowing if he would have another day in which he would be safe. Surely the words of that hymn we sang were true of his life: Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also; the body they may kill, God's truth abideth still.