

Week 3: Translations of “Ein’ Feste Burg”

Martin Luther, 1529	Literal Translation	Thomas Carlyle, 1831	Frederick Hedge, 1852
<p>Ein feste burg ist unser Gott, ein gute wehr und waffen. Er hilfft unns frey aus aller not die uns ytzt hat betroffen. Der alt böse feind mit ernst ers ytzt meint, gros macht und viel list sein grausam rüstung ist auff erd ist nicht seins gleichen.</p>	<p>A strong fortress is our God, a good defense and weapon; He helps us freely out of all distress, that now has us befallen. The old evil foe, gravely now intends, great might and much cunning is his dreadful armor on Earth is not his equal.</p>	<p>A safe stronghold our God is still, a trusty shield and weapon; he'll keep us clear from all the ill that hath us now o'ertaken. The ancient prince of hell hath risen with purpose fell; strong mail of craft and power he weareth in this hour; on earth is not his fellow.</p>	<p>A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing; Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing. For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe; his craft and pow'r are great, and, armed with cruel hate, on earth is not his equal.</p>
<p>Mit unser macht ist nichts gethan, wir sind gar bald verloren: Es streit fur uns der rechte man, den Gott hat selbs erkoren. Fragstu, wer der ist? er heist Jhesu Christ, der Herr Zebaoth, und ist kein ander Gott, das felt mus er behalten.</p>	<p>With our might nothing is done, we would utterly soon be lost; For us fights the right man, whom God Himself elected. You ask who he is? He is named Jesus Christ, the Lord Sabaoth, and is no other God, He must hold the field.</p>	<p>With force of arms we nothing can, full soon were we down-ridden; but for us fights the proper Man whom God himself hath bidden. Ask ye who is this same? Christ Jesus is his name, the Lord Sabaoth's Son; he, and no other one, shall conquer in the battle.</p>	<p>Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing; were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing. Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He; Lord Sabaoth, His name, from age to age the same, and He must win the battle.</p>
<p>Und wenn die welt vol Teuffel wehr unnd wolt uns gar vorschlingen, So fürchten wir unns nicht zu sehr, es sol uns doch gelingen. Der Fürst dieser welt, wie sawr er sich stellt, thut er unns doch nicht, das macht, er ist gericht, ein wörtlin kan yhn fellen.</p>	<p>And if the world should fill with devils and desire to utterly devour us, we are not afraid so much, we shall yet succeed. The prince of this world, as sour as he makes himself, does nothing to us yet, it is done, he is judged, a little word can fell him.</p>	<p>And were this world all devils o'er, and watching to devour us, we lay it not to heart so sore; they cannot overpower us. And let the prince of ill look grim as e'er he will, he harms us not a whit; for why? His doom is writ; a word shall quickly slay him.</p>	<p>And tho' this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, we will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph thro' us. The Prince of Darkness grim— we tremble not for him; his rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure, one little word shall fell him.</p>
<p>Das wort sie sollen lassen stahn und kein danck dazu haben, Er ist bey unns wol auff dem plan mit seinem geist und gaben. Nemen sie den leib, gut, eher, kindt und weib las faren dahin, sie habens kein gewin, das reich mus uns doch bleiben.</p>	<p>The Word they shall let stand, and no thanks be had for it; He is with us well in the plan, with His spirit and gifts. Should they take your body, goods, honor, child and wife: let them go from here, they have no gain, the kingdom must yet remain ours.</p>	<p>God's word, for all their craft and force, one moment will not linger, but, spite of hell, shall have its course; 'tis written by his finger. And though they take our life, goods, honour, children, wife, yet is their profit small; these things shall vanish all: the city of God remaineth.</p>	<p>That word above all earthly pow'rs, no thanks to them, abideth; the Spirit and the gifts are ours thro' Him who with us sideth. Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also; the body they may kill: God's truth abideth still, His kingdom is forever.</p>