

CROOKED STICKS AT AUGSBURG A.D. 1530

By Otto J. Eckert

“Put out the fire, Charles!” This challenge was hurled at Charles V from various sides and for various reasons in 1530. It was also presented to him in a dumb show acted out before him and his brother Ferdinand as they sat at dinner, some say immediately after their arrival in Augsburg on June 15, 1530. First a man dressed in a doctor’s gown appeared with a bundle of sticks, some straight and some crooked. He laid them on the hearth and left. On the back of his robe was the word “Reuchlin.” In came another player who tried to arrange the straight and crooked sticks to lie side by side. After much trying he lost his patience and left the room. On his back was the name “Erasmus.” An Augustinian Monk followed with a dish filled with fire. He sorted out the crooked sticks, threw them into the fireplace, lighted them, blew into them to make them blaze, and retired. This was Luther. Then a fourth player appeared garbed as an emperor. He tried to put the fire out with his sword (the edict of Worms) but only made it blaze up the more. When he withdrew, a fifth player with a triple crown in pontifical robe came forth. Frightened at the blazing fire he looked about for some means to put it out and spied two cans. One was filled with water and the other with oil. He grabbed the wrong can and poured oil over the fire, which then blazed up so mightily that he ran out of the room in terror. This was Leo X. Now Charles V was to put out the fire at Augsburg to preserve the Holy Roman Empire and with it at the same time the supremacy of the Pope (at this time Clement VII) who had promoted Charles to sacred orders and placed the diamond studded golden crown of the Holy Roman Empire on his head with much pomp and ceremony at Bologna on the 22nd of the previous February.

There was much behind the desire for putting out the fire just at this time, even though it might require some toleration and even concessions by all concerned. Suleiman the Magnificent was in Austria with his armies, posing a serious threat to the security of the Empire and all its inhabitants. The skies looked dark indeed in 1530. In February or March of this year Luther in connection with his translation of Daniel wrote as follows to Frederick of Saxony: *“Das romisch Reich ist am Ende, der Türk aufs Hohest kommen, die Pracht des Papstthumbs fället dahin, und knacket die Welt an allen Enden fast, als wollt sie schier brechen und fallen. Denn dass itzt dasselbige romisch Reich unter unserm Kaiser Carolo ein wenig aufsteiget und maechtiger wird, denn es lange Zeit her gewesen ist, dunkt mich, es sei die Letzte”* (The Roman Empire has reached its end; the Turk has come up very high, the glory of the Papacy is declining, and on all sides the world is creaking mightily as if it would all but break apart and fall to pieces. For that this same Roman Empire is rising a bit now under our Emperor Charles and is becoming more powerful than it has been for a long time appears to me to be the last time).¹ —Luther sees in this “rising a bit” but a flaming up before the final flickering out not only of the Empire but perhaps also of the entire universe, and is afraid Judgment Day may come upon him before he has finished translating the Bible. He was right about the flickering out of the Holy Roman Empire. It spent its last flame in the glittering glamour of the brilliant pomp and dazzling pageantry of the imperial parade at Augsburg in 1530.² Nor did he look with undue pessimism on the world situation in his day. Men’s hearts were failing them for fear and for looking after those things which were coming on the earth. Luke 21:26. The superstitious reported evil omens from all parts of the realm.

1 Erlangen 54, 134.

2 Two companies of soldiers in bright uniforms led the procession. The electors of the Empire and their households followed, dressed in silk and damask and in gold brocade, in robes of crimson and the brilliant colors of their houses, behind them John of Saxony, the first in rank, carrying the unsheathed glittering sword of the Emperor. Then came Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz, the Bishop of Cologne, King Ferdinand of Austria and last of all his brother Charles V, resplendent in the dazzling robes and apparel of the Emperor, under a rich canopy of red, white, and green damask, and on a horse of the purest white. In the procession were hundreds of horsemen with bright cuirasses in red doublets and brilliantly colored plumes on their head gear, pages in red and yellow, nobles in silk and velvet, trumpeters, drummers, heralds, grooms, footmen, prancing steeds, cross bearers, etc. What a show! But the Holy Roman Empire was standing on its last legs whistling in the dark. Grand outward display veiled inward decay.

That is why there was much sentiment for composing religious differences in the interest of peace and harmony, so as to be better able to meet the common problems and the common foe of the Empire. This sentiment was also expressed by the Emperor. On the 21st of January, 1530, he (Charles V) summoned all the estates of the Empire to Augsburg and addressed them as follows: "Let us put an end to all discord, let us renounce our antipathies, let us offer to our Saviour the sacrifice of all our errors, let us make it our business to comprehend and weigh with meekness the opinions of others. Let us annihilate what has been said or done on both sides contrary to right, and let us seek after Christian truth. Let us all fight under one and the same leader, Jesus Christ, and let us strive thus to meet in one communion, one church, and one unity."

This same sentiment was, no doubt, in part responsible for Melanchthon's words to Valdez at Augsburg when he said, "The Lutheran question is not so complicated and so unseemly as his majesty fancies; we do not oppose the Catholic Church, as is commonly believed. The whole controversy is reducible to these three points: the two kinds in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, the marriage of pastors, and the abolition of private masses. If we could agree on these articles, it would be easy to come to an understanding on the others."—These words were spoken by Melanchthon in assurance that Lutherans taught no "impious doctrines on the Holy Trinity, on Jesus Christ, and on the blessed Mother of God." In emphasizing the points of agreement and minimizing the differences Melanchthon even went so far as to say that the latter were no more serious than the use of German in the mass. He was moved to such compromising not only by the friendliness and congeniality of conciliatory, moderate papal representatives but also by the fear of public disapproval of any act that would prevent reconciliation with Rome—a fear coupled with a personal dread that lack of unity and harmony would bring much inconvenience, trouble and distress to all of Christendom, and persecution to the followers of Luther. At any rate Melanchthon was often found weeping at his desk frightened and dismayed. His vision was temporarily obscured as he looked at the sticks. He no longer saw how straight the straight ones were and the crooked ones began to look straighter. Maybe the two could be laid beside each other.

But was there perhaps also not some soft spot in Luther that might incline him to compromise? If anywhere it would be found in his excommunication which filled him with troublesome thoughts at times, much more than his being outlawed. Such troublesome thoughts are indicated when he says: "*Wahr ist, im Papstthum ist Gottes Wort, Apostelamt, und wir die Heilige Schrift, Taufe, Sakrament, und Predigtstuhl von ihnen genommen haben; was wüssten wir sonst davon? Darum muss auch der Glaube, christliche Kirche, Christus und der heilige Geist bei ihnen sein. Was thue ich denn, dass ich wider solche als der Schüler wider seinen Meister predige? Da stürmen denn solche Gedanken ins Herz: Nun sehe ich, dass ich unrecht habe; O, dass ichs nicht angefangen und hie kein Wort gepredigt hätte. Denn wer darf sich setzen wider die Kirche, davon wir im Glauben bekennen: Ich gläube eine heilige christliche Gemeinde u.s.w.? Nun finde ich dasselbe auch im Papstthum; darum muss folgen, so ich sie verdamme, so bin ich im höchsten Bann, verworfen und verdammt von Gott und allen Heiligen. Nun, was soll man hier thun? Schwer ist es hier zu bestehen und wider solchen Bann zu predigen*" (It is true that God's Word and the apostolic office are found in the Papacy and that we have obtained the scriptures, baptism, the sacrament and our ministry from them; otherwise what would we know about these things? Therefore, faith, the Christian Church, and the Holy Spirit must be with them. What am I doing when I preach against such, as a disciple against his master! Such thoughts as the following come storming into the heart: Now I see that I am in the wrong; O, that I had never started this fray and had never preached a single word. For who dares set himself against the Church, of which we say in the Creed: I believe in a holy Christian communion etc.? Now I find this also in the Papacy; so it must follow that if I condemn it, I am in the highest ban, rejected and damned by God and all saints. Now what is to be done? It is hard to stand up here and preach in view of such a ban).³ Luther never really desired to be separate from Rome. The thought of his excommunication was an unpleasant one. Would it not move him to pull at least a few of the crooked sticks out of the fire at Augsburg and lay them alongside the straight ones in the hope that they might straighten out?

One could perhaps come to some understanding now, where that had been impossible before. The attitude of the Papists had changed since the last Diet of Spire (1529) and especially since the first one (1526).

³ *Geist aus Luthers Schriften* III, 118.

The atmosphere was much more friendly both because of the situation in the Empire and the gain in power and influence of Luther's cause. He no longer stood alone. A number of princes and the representatives of many cities stood with him. Moderates in the Catholic camp under the leadership of Albrecht of Mainz (the one who sent Luther a wedding present) were eager to bring about some agreement. The fanatics, who would bring fire and sword on all heretics, could not forestall a presentation of the Lutheran position at the Diet. The Protestants would at least be heard. Some adjustments and concessions might be made to begin with. Other things could be considered at some future meeting, which had been suggested. Something, if not everything, might be gained and the rest could follow. —We cannot know all the thoughts that went through the outlawed and excommunicated Luther's mind as he sat in the "region of the birds" up there in the Coburg near Augsburg; but we would not be surprised if the temptations of the devil he speaks of enduring there included at least some of those expressed above.

How did Luther meet the temptations to compromise? That is seen from *D. Martin Luthers Bedenken über etliche streitige Artikel etc. deutsch gestellet auf dem Kaiserlichen Reichstag zu Augsburg Anno 1530*⁴ (Dr. Martin Luther's Misgivings concerning several controversial articles etc., given in German at the Imperial Diet of Augsburg in 1530). In this writing Luther declares himself willing to make concessions even in such cases where they may have been distasteful to him personally. Regarding monasteries which had not been liberated (*unverledigte Klöster*) he says: "Wollen wir gerne willigen, dass die Personen, so darinnen sind, bleiben und versorget werden mir Nahrung und Schutz, wie für Alters her geschehn" (We gladly agree to it, that the persons in them remain and be provided with food and shelter as has been done for ages). He would even grant that liberated monasteries be re-established. But in both cases he would not grant that their masses and other ungodly affairs be carried on and protected (*dass man sollte ihr Messen und ander gottlos Wesen handhaben und schützen*) or that any one should be forced to remain in them or to return to them. If the Emperor chooses to do that he has the power (*ist Oberherr*) and will have to act on his own conscience, but Luther would not have his conscience burdened in such matters (*In solchen Sachen soil unser Gewissen nicht gleich mir ihm beschweret sein*). He is also willing, if that should be considered advisable (*siehet mans abes für gut an*), that the Emperor be told that there will be no objection to regulations regarding the eating of meat and fasting provided consciences are not burdened, since Paul forbids that. It seems Luther is bending over backwards to make concessions and to honor the Emperor, who in spite of everything was still "*unser Kaiser Carolus*" to him. Yet he would not put the crooked sticks back with the straight ones before taking the crooks out of them.

Here a little digression: Luther's willingness to put up with something he did not like, provided it could be done without denying some truth, is due to the fact that he will obey his Emperor. He will not resist the power, even when it encroaches on the affairs of the Church, except for conscience' sake and then only passively. That was also his position regarding any suggestion of using arms on the part of those supporting the Lutheran cause should things come to a bad pass at Augsburg and persecution by the sword (should) follow. Then one would have to suffer martyrdom.⁵

4 Erlangen 65, 46. The writing bears no date except the year 1530. It must be placed after June 25 when the Augsburg Confession, so masterfully written by Melancthon, was read. Very likely it falls into that period when negotiations in a mixed commission had reached a low point about the middle of August. Melancthon was good on paper but poor on his feet when it came to standing for what he had written.

5 Though Luther had the spirit of a martyr he had no desire to be one if he could help it. When all attempts at reconciliation failed in Augsburg, the Emperor gave the Evangelicals till April, 1531, to submit or else feel the edge of the sword. Against this threat Luther had appealed from the Coburg to his old friend and adversary, with whom he often corresponded, the powerful Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz, then at the diet. The letter in which Luther makes his appeal is dated July 6, 1530, and covers almost 10 pages in the Erlangen Edition (volume 54, 159–168). Luther says page 161: "*Hie bitte ich nu aufs Unterthänigst, weil kein Hoffnung da ist, dass wir (wie gesagt ist) der Lehre eins werden, E.K.F.G. wollten sampt andern dahin arbeiten, class jenes Teil Friede halte, und glaube, was es wölle, und lasse uns auch glauben diese Wahrheit, die itzt für ihren Augen bekannt und untadelig erfunden ist*" (Since, as has been said, there is no hope of agreement in doctrine, I most submissively pray that your Electoral Grace will work together with others to the end that that part [our adversaries] will keep the peace and believe what they will, but let us too believe the truth which has now been made known before their eyes and found blameless). Albrecht did protest very vigorously at Augsburg against the use of the sword. In appealing to Albrecht Luther made an appeal to secular power and influence of which Albrecht wielded a great deal.

But if Luther was willing to make some concessions, so were also the Papists, *lauts ihrer überreichten Notel* (according to the memorandum they transmitted) as Luther puts it. The Papists would grant that both the bread and the wine be given in the Lord's supper. Luther says in his *Misgivings*, however, they desired that it should also be taught that it is not wrong to give and receive only the bread (*sie begehren, wir sollen lehren, class es gleichwohl auch nicht unrecht sei einerlei Gestalt zu geben*) and that those who desired it should be given only the bread (*sie begehren, wit sollen auch einerlei Gestalt bei uns reiehen denen, so es begehren*). Luther rejects the offer because of the conditions attached to it. He could never teach that it was not wrong to give only the bread. Christ's covenant cannot be changed. The straight must be kept straight and nothing crooked tolerated beside it.

Regarding the mass the Catholics would consent to add an explanation (Glossa) to the word *sacrificium* (offering) in their canon to the effect that it is to be understood as an offering in remembrance (*zum Gedächtnis*). In his *Misgivings* Luther answers: "*Soll abet die Glosse recht sein, so muss die Messe nicht ein opus operatum sein, und stösst also entweder der Canon die Glosa umb, oder die Glosa den Canonem. Denn die Glosa und der Canon mögen beide zugleich nicht bestehen, weil der Canon klärlich bitter, dass Gott solche Opfer (wie sie sagen) des Gedächtniss solle versöhnen uns und alle, für die es geschieht*" (If the explanation is correct, the mass cannot be a meritorious work. So either the canon is overthrowing the explanation or the explanation the canon. For the explanation and the canon cannot stand together, since the canon clearly teaches that such sacrifices [as they say] of remembrance should reconcile to God us and all for whom they are offered). Luther will not accept the straight with the crooked, for under those circumstances even the straightest is crooked.

It appears that also some offer of turning over litigation in matrimonial affairs (over which the Catholic Church had considerable control) was made. This offer did not tempt Luther in the least. He ever held that such things were not his affairs except where he as a pastor could guide, direct, and comfort consciences in matrimonial difficulties, and that it was not the business of the church to act in a legal capacity in violations of the civil or criminal code. So Luther gives a short and snappy answer in this case. He says in his *Misgivings*: "*Immer hinweg mit solchen Sachen zu Bischoffen, Officialn, Henkern und wer sie haben will*" (Away with these things to bishops, officials, hangmen, or whoever cares to have them). At another time he said: "*Ich wehre mich fast, rufe und schreie, man soll solche Sachen der weltlichen Obrigkeit lassen*" (I object mightily, call out and cry that such things should be left to the secular government). Luther would flee from the unhappy and unscriptural medieval mixture of church and state in these affairs. Equally terse was his rejection of any compromise concession in the marriage of priests. He would in no wise grant (*in keinem Wege willigen*) that marriage be forbidden to any one. To do so is devil's doctrine (*Teufels Lehre*) I Tim. 4. Here the Catholic party was willing to grant that married pastors be tolerated until the next council, when this matter would be given more consideration. This is known from other sources.

Another concession not directly mentioned by Luther in his *Misgivings* is implied when he says, "*Von diesem Artikel können wir nicht weichen.... Begehrt aber Kaiserl. Majest. etlicher Stücke Erklärung, als de sola fide, de satisfactionibus, de meritis etc., so ist unser Theil dasselbige zu tun allezeit erbötig*" (We cannot deviate from this article.... But if His Imperial Majesty requires an explanation on several points such as *de sola fide, de satisfactionibus, de meritis etc.*, we on our part stand ready to give it at any time). In these points the Roman theologians were willing to speak of grace alone and faith alone in a certain sense. Even when it came to works they said, "It is only of works performed with grace that we speak." It was an echo of a peculiar twist of thought found in Augustine (cf. *Quartalschrift*, July, 1956, pp. 163–164) when they went on to say, "But we say that in such works there is something meritorious." Thus they would grant the *sola gratia* and *sola fide* one way, and yet subtly yield nothing of their wrong position in the matter. Luther would have nothing to do with such a concession. In spite of his having been an Augustinian he saw how crooked this stick was. In fact he saw through the whole dealing of Rome at Augsburg even when Melanchthon lost his bearings entirely and stood ready to make compromises in spite of the masterful confession he had written. Melanchthon had fallen victim of profoundly conceived and skillfully executed plots and was willing to return to the jurisdiction of Rome. He

said, “If we repeal the episcopal jurisdiction what will be the consequence to our descendants? ... We must unite with the bishops, lest the infamy of schism should overwhelm us forever.”

Luther’s opinion regarding any offers, concessions, or dealings concerning the question of coming under the jurisdiction of Rome is given in his *Misgivings* in the words: “*Es ist ein vergeblich Ding, doss man von der Jurisdiction handelt; denn wo sie uns nicht leiden und nichts nachlassen, sondern stracks immerhin verdammen wöllen, so können wit keiner Jurisdiction von ihnen gewarten, ohn des Meister Hansen. Wohl ist es wahr, wo sie unser Lehre wollten leiden und nicht mehr verfolgen, so wollten wit ihnen keinen Abbruch thun an ihrer Jurisdiction, Dignität oder wie sie es nennen. Denn wit begehren freilich nicht Bischoff noch Cardinal zu sein, sondern allein gute Christen, die sollen arm sein, Matth. 5 und Lucä 4*” (It is useless to carry on any dealings concerning jurisdiction. For if they will not endure us nor yield in anything, but desire only to condemn us, we can expect no jurisdiction from them except that of Master Hans [the executioner]. But if they would permit our doctrine and no longer persecute us, then truly, we would not desire to take away any of their jurisdiction, dignity or whatever they call it. For we, of course, desire to be neither bishop nor cardinal, but only good Christians, who should be poor. Matt. 5 and Luke 4). The question of jurisdiction will not trouble Luther if only Rome gives in and no longer violates the truths which are involved. In that case discussions or dealings regarding jurisdiction could be considered. Luther would then be satisfied to be only a poor Christian. He wanted no benefits or honors. But in case there is no yielding (and Luther means a real yielding and no compromise as seen from the foregoing), there would be no use of even discussing jurisdiction. Thus Luther returns all the crooked sticks with his disapproval in the communication he sent from the Coburg to his friends (I assume) in Augsburg in the valley below. There were other communications of that kind, particularly to Melancthon. Though Luther was not in Augsburg he played a great part in what took place there.

But Luther has by no means finished with the *Notel* of the Papists by returning the crooked sticks it offered. For this *Notel* brought not only compromise offers but a very serious charge against Luther. It was brought in connection with Luther’s insistence that the only proper way to administer the Sacrament is to give both bread and wine. It is mentioned by Luther in the words, “*Doss sie abet anzeigen, ob wit denn die ganze Christenheit verdammen wöllen, die doch einer Gestalt als recht gebraucht hat*” (That they speak as though we wish to damn all Christendom, which has used only one form as being correct). In his *Misgivings* Luther first states that the fact the Church has used one form only for a long time does not make that use acceptable, for one must look to the Word and not to Christendom. He says: “*So ist nicht die Christenheit ein Regel und Maasz uber Gottes Wort, sondern Gottes Wort ist ein Regel und Maasz uber die Christenheit. Und die Christenheit macht nicht Gottes Wort, sondern Gottes Wort macht die Christenheit*” (Christendom is not a rule and measure above God’s Word, but God’s Word is a rule and measure above Christendom. Christendom does not make God’s Word, but God’s Word makes Christendom). The fact that all Christendom has lived in an abuse for a long time does not sanction the abuse.

He then very emphatically rejects the charge that he is summarily damning all Christendom that has lived with the abuse of one kind in times past. This is not the fault of Christendom, but of the tyrants and false teachers who have held Christendom in captivity under such a sacrilege, oppressed them with this abuse, and have established it without the consent and knowledge of Christendom and introduced it by force (*Und ist nicht der Christenheit Schuld, sondern der Tyrannen und falschen Lehrer, die mir solchem Freyel und Missbrauch die Christenheit gefangen und unterdruckt, und ohn Bewilligung oder Mitwissen der Christenheit solches aufgericht und mir Gewalt eingeführt haben*). He would condemn the false teachers rather than those whom they have misled.

To say that all Christendom is damned because of such errors is unthinkable to Luther. For he goes on to say that just as individual Christians, even the best of them, are not without imperfections, so it is also with Christendom as a whole and for that matter with any congregation or church body. It must ever pray, “Cleanse Thou me from secret faults.” Such faults come from the flesh. So the first Church erred at Jerusalem and the Church has erred since. Yet Christendom is holy in spite of its spots and wrinkles, through the forgiveness of sins. This is a thought which recurs in Luther again and again. Because of the flesh the Church is never perfect in itself; but it is ever completely holy in the Spirit because of Christ and His righteousness. So Luther here in

his *Misgivings*. In his *Ad Galatas* he goes so far as to say this of Rome insofar as it has Christians in it. He says (Erlangen I, 40–41): *Nos bodie vocamus ecclesiam romanam sanctam.... Antichristus sedet in templo Del.... Manet in romana urbe ... baptismus, sacramentum, vox et textus evangelii, sacra scriptura, ministeria, nomen Christi, nomen Dei* (We today call the Roman Church holy... The Antichrist is sitting in the temple of God... Baptism, the Sacrament, the voice and text of the Gospel, the Sacred Scriptures, ministries, the name of Christ and the name of God are found in Rome). Where the Word is there will be Christians in spite of error. Of all the charges that have been brought against Luther this one that he would condemn all the members of any church body where any of the Gospel is still heard is about the most absurd. Nor would he be so presumptuous as to claim perfection either for himself or his group. Crooked sticks may creep in unbeknown to the Church. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall!

But the picture changes completely for Luther as soon as errors are revealed and the church is made aware of them. Just as emphatically as Luther rejects the thought that he would condemn all Christendom because of some error surreptitiously introduced and carried on for a long time, just so emphatically does he refuse to make any compromise with revealed and recognized error. He says in his *Misgivings*: *“Aber solche Feihle und Irrtum der Christenheit, nachdem sie offenbart werden, soll man nicht billigen noch für Artikel des Glaubens vertheidigen. Denn das wäre dem Heiligen Geist widerstanden, der solches offenbart, und hinfort nicht mehr eine christliche und vergebliche Sünde, sondern eine verstockte und teuflische Verblendung wäre”* (But after such failings and errors of Christendom are revealed, they should not be approved of nor defended as articles of faith. That would be resisting the Holy Spirit who reveals such things, and would no longer be a Christian and venial sin, but a hardened and devilish delusion). When you see the sticks are crooked you can neither defend nor approve them. Nor can they be left beside the straight ones. That for Luther meant separation, even if the only question involved were the giving of only the bread in the Lord’s Supper. It had meant that for the Lutherans only a short time before, at Marburg in 1529, in the case of the Swiss and the Strassburgers, where the point of difference also touched the Lord’s Supper. Strangely it was Melancthon who first opposed intercommunion there. This humanist could do one thing at one time and quite the opposite at another. His was a ship with a drifting anchor. It was on this occasion that Luther supposedly said to Zwingli, Bucer, and others, *“Ihr habt einen andern Geist als wir”* (You have a different spirit than we). And so the Lutherans stood by themselves at Augsburg, separated not only from Rome but also from the Swiss and other sects.

We see from this that Luther would make any reasonable and possible concession in purely external things but none regarding anything that stood revealed as error by the Word of God. So too in a sermon of his on Eph. 4:1–6 he is not concerned about dissimilarity and difference in the outward bodily life or external ordinances, customs, and ceremonies (*Ungleichheit und Unterschied des äusserlichen leiblichen Lebens, oder äusserlicher Ordnungen, Sitten, Ceremonien*) but is interested only in one pure and unadulterated doctrine of the Gospel and uniform outward confession of the same (*dass da ist einerlei reine und lautere Lehre des Evangelii und äusserlich Bekenntnisz derselben*). He then goes on to speak of those who do not preserve this unity of doctrine and faith but cause division and offense beside it as St. Paul says Rom. 16:17 (*Welche diese Einigkeit der Lehre und Glaubens in Christo nicht halten, sondern daneben Trennung und Aergernisz anrichten, wie St. Paulus Rom. 16:17 sagt*) and applies this passage (Rom. 16:17) especially to the Papacy. He says: “This certain doctrine and consolation we have against the Papacy which accuses and condemns us for having stepped away from them and avoided them and denounces us as apostates from the Church, while they themselves are really the apostates from the Church, who persecute the truth and disrupt the unity of the Spirit (under the name and title of the Church and Christ): therefore everyone is in duty bound by God’s command to contradict them, yes to avoid them and flee from them (*darumb jedermann schuldig ist aus Gottes Gebot, ihnen zu widersprechen, ja sie zu meiden und zu fliehen*).⁶

Avoid and flee—that is what Luther did at Augsburg. He would grant that there had been and still were members of Christendom in the body of Rome in spite of crooked sticks. Granting that was one thing, staying

⁶ Erlangen II, Vol. 9, p. 286 (p. 293 of Erlangen I).

with Rome is quite another. God's Word, which he ever would follow, forbade it. The curtain falls at Augsburg. The politicians have lost the day. Luther would take no crooked sticks, and staunch confessors stood with him as he threw them back into the flames. His spirit would not be quenched. Charles did not put out the fire.⁷

⁷ The source for the Froude story on which this article is based is to be found in Froude's *Life and Letters of Erasmus*, p. 380. D'Aubigne, who relates the incident with more detail, gives no date. He refers to *T. L. Fabricius Opp.*, Omnia, II, 231 as his source. —Perhaps it should be stated that some of the works listed in the "Bibliography and References" for the series of lectures on "Luther and the Reformation" were used for this article. The two mentioned above are among them. This Bibliography appears on page 254 of the October, 1956, issue of the *Quartalschrift*.