

# LUTHER'S WORKS

VOLUME 27

LECTURES ON GALATIANS  
1535

Chapters 5—6

LECTURES ON GALATIANS  
1519

Chapters 1—6

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## *General Introduction*

THE first editions of Luther's collected works appeared in the sixteenth century, and so did the first efforts to make him "speak English." In America serious attempts in these directions were made for the first time in the nineteenth century. The Saint Louis edition of Luther was the first endeavor on American soil to publish a collected edition of his works, and the Henkel Press in Newmarket, Virginia, was the first to publish some of Luther's writings in an English translation. During the first decade of the twentieth century, J. N. Lenker produced translations of Luther's sermons and commentaries in thirteen volumes. A few years later the first of the six volumes in the Philadelphia (or Holman) edition of the *Works of Martin Luther* appeared. Miscellaneous other works were published at one time or another. But a growing recognition of the need for more of Luther's works in English has resulted in this American edition of Luther's works.

The edition is intended primarily for the reader whose knowledge of late medieval Latin and sixteenth-century German is too small to permit him to work with Luther in the original languages. Those who can, will continue to read Luther in his original words as these have been assembled in the monumental Weimar edition (*D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe; Weimar, 1883 ff.*). Its texts and helps have formed a basis for this edition, though in certain places we have felt constrained to depart from its readings and findings. We have tried throughout to translate Luther as he thought translating should be done. That is, we have striven for faithfulness on the basis of the best lexicographical materials available. But where literal accuracy and clarity have conflicted, it is clarity that we have preferred, so that sometimes paraphrase seemed more faithful than literal fidelity. We have proceeded in a similar way in the matter of Bible versions, translating Luther's translations. Where this could be done by the use of an existing English version — King James, Douay, or Revised Standard — we have done so. Where

it could not, we have supplied our own. To indicate this in each specific instance would have been pedantic; to adopt a uniform procedure would have been artificial — especially in view of Luther's own inconsistency in this regard. In each volume the translator will be responsible primarily for matters of text and language, while the responsibility of the editor will extend principally to the historical and theological matters reflected in the introductions and notes.

Although the edition as planned will include fifty-five volumes, Luther's writings are not being translated in their entirety. Nor should they be. As he was the first to insist, much of what he wrote and said was not that important. Thus the edition is a selection of works that have proved their importance for the faith, life, and history of the Christian Church. The first thirty volumes contain Luther's expositions of various Biblical books, while the remaining volumes include what are usually called his "Reformation writings" and other occasional pieces. The final volume of the set will be an index volume; in addition to an index of quotations, proper names, and topics, and a list of corrections and changes, it will contain a glossary of many of the technical terms that recur in Luther's works and that cannot be defined each time they appear. Obviously Luther cannot be forced into any neat set of rubrics. He can provide his reader with bits of autobiography or with political observations as he expounds a psalm, and he can speak tenderly about the meaning of the faith in the midst of polemics against his opponents. It is the hope of publishers, editors, and translators that through this edition the message of Luther's faith will speak more clearly to the modern church.

J. P.  
H. L.

## *Introduction to Volume 27*

THE term “Luther’s *Galatians*” could conceivably be taken to refer to any one of five (or even six) commentaries on the Epistle to the Galatians by Martin Luther. Most often it is the *Galatians* published in 1535 that is referred to by this title. The first four chapters of that exposition have been published as Volume 26 of *Luther’s Works*, together with our historical introduction to the entire commentary. Here in Volume 27 we are presenting the fifth and sixth chapters of the *Galatians* of 1535 (Weimar, XL-2, 1–184; St. Louis, IX, 600–771), as well as Luther’s preface to the printed version of his lectures (Weimar, XL-1, 33–37; St. Louis, IX, 8–15), written in 1538. Underlying this commentary are notes from Luther’s actual lectures in 1531; these notes, which have been preserved and are printed in the Weimar edition, could also be called “Luther’s *Galatians*,” as could perhaps the revised edition of the printed commentary, published in 1538, which has served as the basis for all previous translations into English.

But in addition to these two (or three) expositions, there are three interrelated commentaries on Galatians that date back to the beginnings of Luther’s Reformation. The earliest of these three versions is a student notebook on Luther’s lectures of 1516–17, first published in this century by Hans von Schubert and then revised for the Weimar edition by Karl Meisinger (Weimar, LVII). Using those lectures as a basis, but significantly revising and expanding some of his earlier judgments, Luther prepared a printed version of his exposition (Weimar, II, 445–618; St. Louis, VIII, 1352–1661) and published it in 1519. Four years later, in 1523, he published a revised and abbreviated version of the commentary, omitting most of the proper names and many of the *obiter dicta* that had appeared in the edition of 1519; the Weimar editors have documented these deviations in footnotes to the text of the 1519 *Galatians*.

Thus Luther’s several commentaries on the Epistle to the Galatians provide unmatched source material for research into his intellectual and religious development for two decades or more; they are also extremely useful for a study of the methods of his editors. For the

purposes of our edition, however, the versions of 1519 and 1535 seemed the most appropriate. As usual, Luther's letters provide the most extensive and reliable information about the progress of his exegetical works. On October 26, 1516, he wrote to Johann Lang, complaining of the burden of his duties and adding: "You write that yesterday you began [lecturing on] Book II of the *Sentences* [of Peter Lombard]. But tomorrow I shall begin the Epistle to the Galatians, although I am afraid that the presence of the plague may not permit it to continue once I have begun it." From the notebook of Luther's student we learn that his last lecture on Galatians was delivered on March 13, 1517.

Two years later Luther was engaged in preparing the lectures for publication. Still complaining about too much work, he wrote to Spalatin on *Invocavit* Sunday (March 13), 1519: "I am now giving birth to Paul's Epistle to the Galatians." On September 3, 1519, he was able to inform Lang: "I am told that the Epistle to the Galatians has been completed today." He dispatched a copy of the book to Spalatin on St. Maurice's Day (September 22), 1519; and on October 3 he wrote to Johann Staupitz: "Reverend Father, I am sending you two copies of my foolish Galatians. I am not as pleased with it as I was at first, and I see that it could have been expounded more completely and clearly. But who can do everything at once? In fact, who can manage to do very much continually? Nevertheless, I am confident that Paul is made clearer here than he has been before in [the commentaries of] others, even though it is not yet satisfactory to my taste."

Our edition of the *Galatians* of 1519 has attempted to identify the hundreds of citations from the Bible, the classics, the church fathers, and the medieval doctors with which the commentary is filled; as could be expected, quotations from Jerome and Augustine are the most frequent, but the extent of Luther's dependence on Erasmus is also evident. Even more interesting is Luther's effort, with the help of Erasmus and of Melancthon, to go beyond the Vulgate to an understanding of the Greek text. In later years Luther reflected on the differences between his first and second sets of lectures on Galatians and tended to disparage his earlier work. Our edition will make it possible for the reader restricted to English to study those differences for himself and thus to examine at first hand the engagement with Sacred Scripture out of which Luther's reformatory work and thought emerged.

J. P.

LECTURES ON  
GALATIANS  
1535

Chapters 5–6

*Translated by*  
JAROSLAV PELIKAN



## CHAPTER FIVE

As he approaches the end of the epistle, Paul argues vigorously and passionately in defense of the doctrine of faith and of Christian liberty against the false apostles, who are its enemies and destroyers. He aims and hurls veritable thunderbolts of words at them to lay them low. At the same time he urges the Galatians to avoid their wicked doctrine as though it were some sort of plague. In the course of his urging he threatens, promises, and tries every device to keep them in the freedom achieved for them by Christ. Therefore he says:

1. *For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore.*

That is: "Be firm!" Thus Peter says (1 Peter 5:8-9): "Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith." "Do not be smug," he says, "but be firm. Do not lie down or sleep, but stand." It is as though he were saying: "Vigilance and steadiness are necessary if you are to keep the freedom for which Christ has set us free. Those who are smug and sleepy are not able to keep it." For Satan violently hates the light of the Gospel, that is, the teaching about grace, freedom, comfort, and life. Therefore as soon as he sees it arise, he immediately strives to obliterate it with all his winds and storms. For this reason Paul urges godly persons not to be drowsy and smug in their behavior but to stand bravely in the battle against Satan, lest he take away the freedom achieved for them by Christ.

Every word is emphatic. "Stand fast," he says, "in freedom." In what freedom? Not in the freedom for which the Roman emperor has set us free but in the freedom for which Christ has set us free. The Roman emperor gave – indeed, was forced to give – the Roman pontiff a free city and other lands, as well as certain immunities, privileges, and concessions.<sup>1</sup> This, too, is freedom; but it is a political

<sup>1</sup> The Donation of Constantine, which purported to be a deed of gift from Constantine to the pope, had been exposed as a forgery by Lorenzo Valla in 1440.

freedom, according to which the Roman pontiff with all his clergy is free of all public burdens. In addition, there is the freedom of the flesh, which is chiefly prevalent in the world. Those who have this obey neither God nor the laws but do what they please. This is the freedom which the rabble pursues today; so do the fanatical spirits, who want to be free in their opinions and actions, in order that they may teach and do with impunity what they imagine to be right. This is a demonic freedom, by which the devil sets the wicked free to sin against God and men. We are not dealing with this here although it is the most widespread and is the only goal and objective of the entire world. Nor are we dealing with political freedom. No, we are dealing with another kind, which the devil hates and attacks most bitterly.

This is the freedom with which Christ has set us free, not from some human slavery or tyrannical authority but from the eternal wrath of God. Where? In the conscience. This is where our freedom comes to a halt; it goes no further. For Christ has set us free, not for a political freedom or a freedom of the flesh but for a theological or spiritual freedom, that is, to make our conscience free and joyful, unafraid of the wrath to come (Matt. 3:7). This is the most genuine freedom; it is immeasurable. When the other kinds of freedom — political freedom and the freedom of the flesh — are compared with the greatness and the glory of this kind of freedom, they hardly amount to one little drop. For who can express what a great gift it is for someone to be able to declare for certain that God neither is nor ever will be wrathful but will forever be a gracious and merciful Father for the sake of Christ? It is surely a great and incomprehensible freedom to have this Supreme Majesty kindly disposed toward us, protecting and helping us, and finally even setting us free physically in such a way that our body, which is sown in perishability, in dishonor, and in weakness, is raised in imperishability, in honor, and in power (1 Cor. 15:42-43). Therefore the freedom by which we are free of the wrath of God forever is greater than heaven and earth and all creation.

From this there follows the other freedom, by which we are made safe and free through Christ from the Law, from sin, death, the power of the devil, hell, etc. For just as the wrath of God cannot terrify us — since Christ has set us free from it — so the Law, sin, etc., cannot accuse and condemn us. Even though the Law denounces us and sin terrifies

## CHAPTER SIX

1. *Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of meekness.*

**T**HIS is a second fine moral precept,<sup>1</sup> and one that is decidedly necessary for this age. For the Sacramentarians have seized upon this passage and draw from it the inference that in patience we should yield somewhat to our fallen brethren and should cover over their error through love, which “believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Cor. 13:7).<sup>2</sup> Paul teaches here in explicit words that those who are spiritual should restore the erring in a spirit of meekness. They maintain that this issue is not important enough to warrant our breaking up Christian concord on account of this one doctrine, for the church has nothing more beautiful or more beneficial than concord. This is how they set forth the forgiveness of sins to us and accuse us of stubbornness because we refuse to yield a hairbreadth to them or to tolerate their error (though they do not want to admit publicly that this is what it is), much less to accuse and restore them in a spirit of gentleness. In this way these dear fellows embellish themselves and their cause, and create resentment against us among many people.

As Christ is my witness, nothing has grieved me so deeply for several years as this disagreement in doctrine. Even the Sacramentarians, if they are willing to admit the truth, know very well that I was not responsible for it. What I have believed and taught since the beginning of our cause about justification, about the sacraments, and about all the other articles of Christian doctrine I still believe and profess today, except with greater certainty; for it has deepened through study, practice, and experience, as well as through great and frequent temptations. Every day I pray Christ to keep me and

<sup>1</sup> From the lecture notes it seems that the first moral was the denunciation of vainglory.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 56, note 33.

[W, XL<sup>2</sup>, 135—137]

strengthen me in this faith and confession to the day of His glorious coming. Amen. In addition, it is evident throughout Germany that at first the doctrine of the Gospel was not attacked by anyone except the papists. Among those who accepted it there was total agreement on all the articles of Christian doctrine. This agreement continued until the sectarians came forward with their new opinions, not only about the sacraments but about several other doctrines.<sup>3</sup> They were the first to disturb the churches and to break up their concord. Since that time more and more sects have inevitably arisen, and these were always followed by greater dissensions. Therefore they are doing us this enormous injury contrary to their own conscience and are arousing this unbearable resentment against us in the sight of the whole world beyond our deserts. It is very burdensome, especially in such an important matter, for an innocent man to endure the punishment that someone else has deserved.

But we could easily forget this injury and accept and restore them in a spirit of meekness if only they returned to the proper way and walked with us in an orderly manner; that is, if they believed and taught faithfully about the Lord's Supper and about the other articles of Christian doctrine, and if, in unanimous consensus with us, they proclaimed, not their own opinions but Christ, that the Son of God might be glorified through us and the Father through Him. But it is unbearable to us when they merely praise love and concord but minimize the issue of the Sacrament, as though it were a matter of little consequence what we believe about the Eucharist, which was instituted by Christ our Lord. We must proclaim concord in doctrine and faith as much as they proclaim concord in life. If they preserve this in its soundness together with us, we shall join them in praising the concord of love, which is to be subordinated to the concord of faith or of the Spirit. For if you lose this, you have lost Christ; and once you have lost Him, love will not do you any good. On the other hand, if you keep Christ and the unity of the Spirit, it does not matter if you dissent from those who corrupt the Word and who thus shatter the unity of the Spirit. I would rather that they depart from me and be my enemies, and the whole world along with them, than that I depart from Christ and have Him as an enemy; this is what would happen if I forsook His clear and simple Word and followed instead the vain notions by which they distort the words of Christ

<sup>3</sup> See p. 105, note 89.

LECTURES ON  
GALATIANS  
1519

Chapters 1–6

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## THE SUBJECT OF PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

**A**LTHOUGH the Galatians had first been taught a sound faith by the apostle, that is, taught to trust in Jesus Christ alone, not in their own righteousnesses or in those of the Law, later on they were again turned away by the false apostles and led to trust in works of legalistic righteousness; for they were very easily deceived by the fact that the name and the example of the great and true apostles were falsely appealed to as commending this. For in the whole life of mortal men there is nothing more deceptive than superstition, that is, than the false and calamitous imitation of the saints. When you look at their works alone and not at their heart as well, it is easy for you to become an ape and a leviathan, that is, to add something and thereby to turn the true religion into superstition or impiety.<sup>17</sup> For — to demonstrate this with the example at hand — the apostles were preserving some ceremonial laws throughout the churches of Judea, just as Jerome testifies that Philo wrote regarding Mark.<sup>18</sup> But those foolish people, not knowing for what reason the apostles did this, soon added on their own the idea that the things they had seen practiced by such great apostles were necessary for salvation, and that no account had to be taken of the one man Paul, who had neither seen nor heard Christ on earth.

But, as Peter had explained very clearly in Acts 15:7-11, the apostles observed these practices, not as being necessary but as being permissible and as doing no harm to those who place their trust for salvation, not in these things themselves but in Jesus Christ. For to those who believe in Christ whatever things are either enjoined or forbidden in the way of external ceremonies and bodily righteousnesses are all pure, adiaphora, and are permissible, except insofar

<sup>17</sup> The source of this etymology appears to be Jerome, *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*, LXXII, 133.

<sup>18</sup> Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, 8, 10.

as the believers are willing to subject themselves to these things of their own accord or for the sake of love. Paul toils with such great ardor to recall the Galatians to this understanding that he takes absolutely no account of Peter and of all the apostles so far as their person, condition (that is, rank), and what people call "position" are concerned. Finally he glories with a kind of very holy pride that he received nothing from them but was rather commended by them. He makes no concession whatever to the opinion of the apostles by which, as he saw, slander of the evangelical truth was being occasioned among the more ignorant; and he considers it far better that he himself and the apostles themselves be without glory than that the Gospel of Christ be nullified.

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1. *Paul an apostle*

Now that the whole Christian world knows Greek, and the *Annotations* of that most eminent theologian Erasmus are in everyone's hands and are diligently used, there is no need to point out what the word "apostle" means in Greek — except to those for whom I am writing, not Erasmus.<sup>1</sup> For the word "apostle" has the same meaning as "one who has been sent." And, as St. Jerome teaches, the Hebrews have a word which they pronounce "Sila," that is, a person to whom, from the act of sending, the name "Sent" is applied.<sup>2</sup> Thus in John 9:7: "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which means Sent)." And Isaiah, in his eighth chapter (v. 6), is not unaware of this hidden meaning when he says: "This people have refused the waters of Shiloah that flow gently." So, too, in Gen. 49:10: "Until Shiloh comes," which Jerome has translated with "the one who is to be sent." On the basis of this passage Paul, writing to the Hebrews (3:1), seems to call Christ an Apostle, that is, a Silas. And in Acts (15:22) Luke mentions a certain Silas.

A more important consideration, however, is the fact that "apostle" is a modest name but at the same time a marvelously awesome and venerable one, a name which expresses equally both remarkable lowliness and loftiness. The lowliness lies in the fact that he is sent, thus bearing witness to his office, his role as servant, his obedience. Furthermore, no one should be impressed by the name as being a title of honor, rely on it, or boast of it. No, by the name of the office he should be drawn at once to Him who does the sending, to Him who authorizes it. From Him one then gains a conception of the majesty and loftiness of him who has been sent and is a servant, in order that

<sup>1</sup> Erasmus, *Annotationes ad locum, Opera*, VI, 801.

<sup>2</sup> Jerome, *Commentarius in Epistolam S. Pauli ad Galatas, Patrologia, Series Latina*, XXVI, 355; henceforth this will be cited as *Commentarius*, followed by an Arabic numeral referring to the column in Vol. XXVI of the Latin *Patrologia*.



he may be received with reverence, not as in our age, when the terms "apostleship," "episcopate," and all the rest have begun to be words expressive, not of an office but of prestige and authority. These men Christ calls by the apposite name in John 10:8 — not "those who have been sent" but "those who come." And interpreting Himself, He calls them "thieves and robbers," since they do not bring the Word of Him who sends them to feed the sheep with it but carry off their own gain and thereby slaughter the sheep. "All who came," He says — that is, were not sent — "are thieves and robbers." And, as the apostle says in Rom. 10:15: "How will they preach unless they are sent?" Would that the shepherds and leaders of the Christian people in our day properly weighed these teachings! For who can preach unless he is an apostle? But who is an apostle except one who brings the Word of God? And who can bring the Word of God except one who has listened to God? But the man who brings his own dogmas or those that rest on human laws and decrees, or those of the philosopher — can he be called an apostle? Indeed, he is one who comes as a thief, a robber, and a destroyer and slayer of souls. The blind man washes in Siloam and receives his sight (John 9:7), and the waters of Siloam are healthful; they are not the strong, proud waters of the king of the Assyrians (Is. 8:7). He, namely, God, sent His Word, and in that way He healed them (Ps. 107:20). A man *comes*, and his own word comes with him; and he causes the woman with an issue of blood to become worse. To put it clearly, this means that as often as the Word of God is preached, it renders consciences joyful, expansive, and untroubled toward God, because it is a Word of grace and forgiveness, a kind and sweet Word. As often as the word of man is preached, it renders the conscience sad, cramped, and full of fear in itself, because it is a word of the Law, of wrath and sin; it shows what a person has failed to do and how deeply he is in debt.

Therefore the church, since its beginning, has never been less happy than it is now; and daily it becomes unhappier, because it is harassed by so many decrees, laws, and statutes, and by almost countless torments, and is far more cruelly weakened than it was by the torturers at the time of the martyrs.<sup>3</sup> And so far are the prelates from being touched by this destruction of souls, so far from being "grieved

<sup>3</sup> It is not clear whether Luther means that the decline of the church set in with the pontificate of Innocent III (d. 1216) or earlier; on this problem see also *Luther's Works*, 21, p. 59, note 20.

## CHAPTER THREE

1. *O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth?*<sup>2</sup>

Now Paul turns again to the Galatians. For Jerome thinks that up to this point he has been speaking against Peter.<sup>1</sup> But I do not know whether he said all this in the presence of Peter. I would suppose that he stopped talking with Peter at the place where he says: "Because by works of the Law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. 2:16), since he is repeating what, as he writes shortly before this, he said to Peter: "Knowing that a man is not justified on the basis of works of the Law, etc." And I would suppose that from this point on he is again dealing with the Galatians and is overthrowing the works of the Law with the rest of his arguments. Nevertheless, let everyone have his own opinion about this.

Accordingly, Paul is glowing through and through with pious zeal. Although he has filled almost the whole epistle with proofs and refutations, yet now and then he mixes in an exhortation and a rebuke. Sometimes he also impresses the same things by way of repetition, as out of apostolic concern he tries everything. He calls them senseless, foolish, out of their minds. According to Jerome, he does so either because he is chiding them on account of a characteristic of their country, just as he brands the Cretans liars in his Epistle to Titus (1:12) and censures other nations for other vices, or because they had come from greater to lesser things and had begun to be children again, so to speak, by returning to the guardianship of the Law.<sup>2</sup> The latter seems to me the more probable, for in what follows he talks about rudiments, about a custodian, about an heir who is a youngster — obviously referring to their foolishness and childishness. The word "bewitched" also indicates this; for witchcraft is said to be harmful particularly to children and to those who have not reached the age of discretion, as Jerome also remarks.

<sup>1</sup> Jerome, *Commentarius*, 372.

<sup>2</sup> Jerome, *Commentarius*, 372.

But "to bewitch" means to do harm with an evil look, as Vergil says: "I do not know what eye is bewitching my tender lambs."<sup>3</sup> "God knows," says Jerome, "whether this is true or not, because it is possible that devils render a service to this sin."<sup>4</sup> This, I believe, is the ailment of little infants that our womenfolk commonly call *die elbe* or *das hertzgespan*, in which we see infants wasting away, growing thin, and being miserably tormented, sometimes wailing and crying incessantly.<sup>5</sup> The women, in turn, try to counter this ailment with I know not what charms and superstitions; for it is believed that such things are caused by those jealous and spiteful old hags if they envy some mother her beautiful baby. For this reason the Greek word, as Jerome attests, means not only to bewitch but also to envy.

Thus when the Galatians were like newborn infants in Christ and were growing auspiciously, they, too, were<sup>6</sup> harmed by the bewitching false apostles and were led back to the leanness, yes, the wretchedness of the Law. As a result, they were wasting away. And this is a very fine comparison; for just as an enchanter fastens baleful eyes on the infant until he does it harm, so a pernicious teacher fastens his evil eye, that is, his godless wisdom, on simple souls until he corrupts the true understanding in them. For in the Scriptures, as Luke 11:34 states, the eye signifies teaching and knowing, even the teacher himself, as in Job 29:15: "I was an eye for the blind," and in Matt. 18:9: "If your eye causes you to sin." These are the ones whom Scripture calls crafty men, mockers, and deceivers of souls. In Ps. 1:1 we read: "He does not sit in the seat of pestilence." The Hebrew text has "in the seat of the mockers." Prov. 3:32 states: "The perverse man is abomination to the Lord, but the upright are in His confidence."

But here the question arises whether in this passage one is to believe that the apostle is endorsing the notion that witchcraft amounts to something. St. Jerome thinks that he made use of a colloquialism and took an example from a notion of the common people, not because he knew that there was witchcraft.<sup>7</sup> In like manner some

<sup>3</sup> Vergil, *Eclogues*, III, 103.

<sup>4</sup> Jerome, *Commentarius*, 373.

<sup>5</sup> What Luther calls *hertzgespan* (or *Herzspann* in modern German) is *cardialgia* or *heartburn*.

<sup>6</sup> We have followed the Jena and St. Louis editors and have changed *sint* to *sunt*.

<sup>7</sup> Jerome, *Commentarius*, 372.

## CHAPTER SIX

5:25. *If we live by the spirit, let us also walk by the spirit.*

I do not think it matters much that our [Latin] codices start the sixth chapter at this point. Jerome and the Greek texts begin it later with "Brethren, if a man is overtaken, etc."<sup>1</sup>

In this epistle Paul observes the same order that he observes in the Letter to the Romans. For there, too, he teaches faith first, through eleven chapters. In the twelfth chapter he treats of love and the fruits of the spirit; and in the thirteenth and those remaining he is at pains to point out that one should take an interest in those who are weak in faith. Thus here, too, after instructing them in faith and love, he makes it his concern that, among other evidences of good moral conduct, they do not disdain those who are weak or have fallen. For this is how St. Augustine — rightly, in my opinion — thinks this is said, namely, against those who, after they have been led back from the letter to the spirit, despise the weaker ones and vainly glory in themselves.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, he thinks, they are admonished, if they are spiritual, not to please themselves but to bear with the infirmities of the weak, as Paul says in Rom. 14:1 and 15:1. For if they failed to do this, they would indeed have begun in the spirit but would not be walking in the spirit, having become proud despisers of their brethren.

Therefore the meaning is this: "I am certain that you have been instructed in the spirit — whether as a result of this letter or as a result of my previous teaching — but that among you there are left some who are troubled with doubts and are not yet able to distinguish between the sound judgment of faith and the works of the Law, since, because of scruples of conscience, they are not willing to desist from the works of the Law and do not trust sufficiently in the

<sup>1</sup> See p. 97, note 80.

<sup>2</sup> Augustine, *Epistolæ ad Galatas expositio*, *Patrologia, Series Latina*, XXXV, 2142.

righteousness of faith alone. These, I say, one must not despise. No, one must treat them with gentle care until they are strengthened and made firm by the experience and example of the strong." For such persons, like the poor, are always left in the midst of a people in order that there may be some toward whom you can practice the duties of love. Therefore "if we live by the spirit, let us walk by the spirit"; that is, let us persevere and make progress. This will happen if we do not let the infirmity of the weak tempt us to disdain them and to be pleased with ourselves. For this would be turning aside from the spirit, pleasing ourselves, and failing to serve others in love. Thus today, too, there is a large throng of those who are weak, even among the very learned, and are miserably tormented by a conscience under pressure of human laws and do not have the courage to trust solely in faith in Christ. But the boys and effeminate men who are ruling in the church do not make any concessions at all to our weaknesses. No, with boisterous violence they put forth the solid masses of their opinions merely to fortify their tyranny as soon as you do not give the answer they want. "Therefore you are a heretic, a heathen, a schismatic," they say. But of this elsewhere.

"Let us walk." This is the same verb that Paul used above, in the fourth chapter (v. 25): "is connected with that, etc." Therefore the meaning is: "Sinai is a mountain in Arabia which is connected, that is, which extends, walks, goes, as far as Jerusalem," as was said in that passage. And below (6:16): "Whoever will follow this rule," that is, will go, will walk. For the force and proper meaning of this verb, as Erasmus has rendered it, is to advance in order, to proceed on the right way, to go forward.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the apostle uses the word appropriately in this passage. He means that they should not turn aside either to the left or to the right but should advance in a straight line and in order, and walk in the spirit they have received.

For since among the people there are both those who are strong and those who are weak, a twofold offense arises — the one on the left, among the weak; the other on the right, among the strong. The apostle is striving to keep them in the middle and to prevent both offenses. There is offense on the part of the weak when those things are done which the weak do not comprehend and are unable to distinguish from the evil outward appearance. Of this Rom. 14 treats most extensively. For example, when the weak saw that others were

<sup>3</sup> The Latin word Erasmus used was *procedere*.

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