

## GAUL AND SPAIN AS SPHERES FOR WORK IN THE DAYS OF PAUL.

BY THE REV. F. R. MONTGOMERY HITCHCOCK, D.D., Rector  
of Tolleshunt Knights, Maldon.

THERE is no reason why St. Paul's original desire to visit Spain (Rom. xv. 24, 28) should have died a natural death. Of all the provinces of the Empire to which the Apostle seems to have limited his work, no other offered the same facilities and opportunities to one who desired to lay a new Christian foundation. Gaul, of course, offered an attractive sphere of work. Massilia (Marseilles), an ancient Greek city with offshoots along the coast of Spain, spared by Julius Caesar to become a centre of Helleno-Italic culture in the West, added Roman civilization and the Latin language to its own Greek, on the southern coast. It was easy of access by road or sea, as the great high-road, the Via Augusta, ran along the coast of Italy through the Riviera to it, then to Narbo, across the Pyrenees into Spain, down to Tarraco and Carthago Nova, and there was connected with a road to Baetica, ending at Gades (Cadiz). Travelling by this road one might go from Rome to Gades with comfort and security. Massilia could also be reached by sea in a couple of days from Ostia. Two hundred miles north of Massilia was the more important Lugudunum (Lyons) at the confluence of the Rhone and Avar, the centre of the Gallic road-system, the headquarters of the Roman army, where the national concilium, or Féis, of the Gallic tribes was held yearly. A little lower down the river lay Vienna, a Gallic *municipium*, and rival of Lugudunum, which was a Roman *colonia*. In the year after Nero's death (A.D. 69) this long-standing feud broke out into open war, in which Galba gave his support to Vienna.<sup>1</sup> The people of Lugudunum made an appeal to the Roman army for help, when they were besieged. Another pathetic appeal was made by the Christians of both these cities, more than a century afterwards (A.D. 177), describing the horrors of the persecution. The only rivalry that existed then between these cities was in zeal for witness to Christ, which made them refuse to obey the orders of that inconsistent philosopher Marcus Aurelius to worship the pagan gods, in which he himself did not believe. Southern Gaul was never more prosperous than in the days of Nero. Lugudunum alone offered a contribution of £30,000 to rebuild Rome after the fire of A.D. 64. "There was an immense marine trade, an active internal navigation, and the towns reached a great size, and were

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus (*Hist.*, I, 65). The Lugdunenses described the provincials of Vienna as "foreigners and enemies"—"cuncta illic externa et hostilia, se coloniam et partem exercitus"—whereas they were a Roman colony and part of the Roman army.

inhabited by a dense population.”<sup>1</sup> Here was a finer sphere for an Apostle than any in the East. St. Paul would hardly have overlooked its advantages to himself as a writer, an orator, a Roman citizen, and a Greek philosopher. No city could have offered him greater opportunities than Massilia, which was connected by long-standing ties with Ephesus,<sup>2</sup> his old sphere of work. It was a centre of education and refinement for the native tribes and made the Galatae “Philhellenes,” as Strabo says.<sup>3</sup> The city of Nemansus (Nismes), on the farther side of the Rhone, was Latin in speech and Roman in constitution and custom. It replaced the canton of the Volcae, and helped to Romanize the south of Gaul. Strabo says (IV, i, 7) that many of the Volcae here adopted Roman style in speech and life, and some had the Roman citizenship. St. Paul could have made his way in both cities, and also with the Celtic natives, who resembled in friendliness and hospitality the Galatians, among whom he had worked in the East. And yet the only evidence—which is after all an inference—for his work there is the note in 2 Timothy iv. 10, “Crescens has gone to *Gallia*,” the reading of NC., whereas *Galatia* is the better supported reading. It may, however, refer to Gaul just as much, if not more than to the eastern province. Galatia is the name Polybius gives to Gallia Cisalpina (II, xxiv, 8; III, xl, 3; III, cxviii, 6), and to Gallia Transalpina in II, xxii, 6. Strabo, in III, ii, 2, says—“the Celts whom they call Galatians” (*Γαλατικοί*), writing of the countries in the west. In III, ii, 8, he calls the people of the Pyrenees *Γαλαταί*. Josephus, Diodorus, Plutarch, and other historians call Gaul *Γαλατία*. Lightfoot’s argument, that *Γαλλία* was not used for two centuries after Christ, is answered by Strabo’s use of *Γαλλικόν* (195) for *Γαλατικόν*. Even if *Γαλατίαν* be the correct reading in 2 Timothy iv. 10, it was the current Greek name for Gaul in the first and second centuries (Ramsay), and its form may be explained by the close proximity of *Λαλματίαν*. *Γαλλίαν* is also the form used in the letter of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons (177, Euseb., *H.E.*, V, i). But *Γαλατία* was used of European Gaul for years after that. Lightfoot gives instances in various writers.<sup>4</sup> We are, therefore, justified in considering the claims of Gaul in this passage, especially when Eusebius, an earlier authority than our oldest manuscript of the New Testament, in *H.E.*, III, iv, has *κρίσεως ἐπὶ τὰς Γαλλίας στείλόμενος*—an expression which can only apply to the provinces of Gaul. There may be, therefore, more in the tradition that Crescens (a Roman name) was the founder of certain churches in Gaul than Prof. W. M. Ramsay allows.<sup>5</sup> It

<sup>1</sup> Arnold, *Roman Provincial Administration*, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, IV, i, 4, mentions that there was a temple of the Ephesian Artemis there, and that the colony of Phocæans inquired at Ephesus for advice before they founded Massilia, and made Aristarche, an Ephesian lady, their priestess.

<sup>3</sup> IV, i.

<sup>4</sup> Galatians, p. 4. Julian, Libanius, Ammianus, etc.

<sup>5</sup> Hastings, *D.B.*, ii, 89. He is claimed as founder of the Churches of Vienne and Mayence. The name Crescens is given by Tacitus, *H.*, i, 76, among the freedmen of Nero, and the centurions (*Ant.*, xv, 11).

would have been strange for Paul, if he had been released, to have overlooked the opportunities presented by southern Gaul. He could have made an entrance at Massilia where Strabo says people wrote *Ἑλληνιστί*; and where many Roman students (*φιλομαθεῖς*) preferred to finish their education rather than in Greece. Strabo, in the same context (IV, i, p. 181), says there were public sophists and physicians in the cities of Gaul. Among the rhetoricians (mentioned by Juvenal, i, 44, and Suetonius, *Calig.* 20) and philosophers Paul would have met foemen worthy of his steel. Having won his footing in Massilia, he would have passed on to Nismes, thence to Narbo, whence he would have made his way by coasting vessel or by road to Tarraco, where his Roman citizenship would have had weight.

It would, of course, have been equally possible for St. Paul to have worked Spain from Gaul as Gaul from Spain. Probably he might have intended to do the latter. For Spain, covered with Roman colonies and thoroughly romanized, presented still greater facilities for his method of operations than Gaul, with its few Latin cities. Since its subjugation in 19 B.C. by Augustus, Spain had rest until the Vandal invasion of A.D. 409. No province was more happy and prosperous, or more receptive of Roman influence than Spain. As Orosius, a Spanish historian of the early part of the fifth century, says, "the whole of Spain reclined in eternal peace"; and Velleius Paterculus (ii, 9), a contemporary of Strabo, declared that it was even free from brigands. Its three divisions, Tarraconensis, Baetica and Lusitania, contained between them twenty-six Roman colonies and thirty municipia in the days of Augustus. In the days of Pliny (iii, 7. 18) Baetica and Tarraconensis had 354 cities and Lusitania forty-five. It was in Roman colonies like Philippi that Paul had found his greatest success; and as he made the limit of Roman territory the limit of his work, he would not have failed, if he had the opportunity, to visit the most Roman of the provinces, especially as he must have made considerable progress in Latin through intercourse with his Guards. This is a point to be emphasized. At the end of his two years' "free custody," he would have an almost intimate knowledge of the mind and training of the Roman soldier, having been daily in charge of a fresh guardsman for that period; not to speak of his two years' term of incarceration in Caesarea (A.D. 57-9) under Roman officers. He was by this time, accordingly, familiar with the soldier's tastes, ambitions, and ways of looking at things and saying things. The men he was mostly in contact with were the Praetorian guardsmen, the flower of the Roman army, especially selected from Italians who spoke Latin. Etruria, Umbria, ancient Latium, and the original Roman colonies,<sup>1</sup> for all provincials were excluded, supplied their finest manhood for the Emperor's protection, and the defence of the State. These men would talk about their strange prisoner to one another, so that his bonds in Christ

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, *Ann.*, iv, 5. See article in *Expositor* by present writer on the Latinity of the Prison Epistle. October, 1924.

became known through the whole brigade of guards, and to all the others (soldiers or people connected with the camp or corps).<sup>1</sup> He would mark their expressions, and hear their explanations of the Roman army methods. He would be attracted not only by the splendour of the men themselves, but also by their shining equipment and arms. Their armour would suggest the Christian panoply; their expeditions and campaigns the Christian warfare. In his presence the men would mount and relieve guard, remove and put on their equipment, and burnish their armour. There are a number of Roman military terms *στρατολογεῖν*,<sup>2</sup> *στρατιώτης*,<sup>3</sup> *στρατεία*<sup>4</sup> *στρατεύεσθαι*,<sup>5</sup> in the Pastorals, as well as in the Paulines, which show Paul's appreciation of the Roman soldier. It is very probable that the number of military colonies in Spain, as well as the general peacefulness of the province, would have attracted his steps thither.

Other considerations would also have prevailed with him. The Spanish people were anxious to improve themselves and to move with the times. They wished for prosperity, and they chose deliberately the best way to secure it. They adopted everything Roman: dress, language, and the worship of the Emperor. And if the Romans had accepted Christianity in those early days, they would doubtless have followed suit. However, they must have adopted Christianity very early, if we are to accept the statement of Irenaeus, as we must. Writing towards the end of the second century he appealed to the fact that the churches in the Spains (*ἐν ταῖς Ἰβηρίαις*)<sup>6</sup> and the Kelts<sup>7</sup> held the apostolic tradition (*Adv. Haer.*, I, x, 2)—the reference being to Baetica, Tarraconensis and Lusitania. Strabo shows how keen the Spaniards were on advancing and improving themselves. He wrote, "The Turdetani, and especially the people of Baetica, have become so completely romanized that they have even forgotten their own native tongue, and most of them have become Latins, and have received Roman colonists, so that they are almost Roman."<sup>8</sup> He singled out such cities as Pax Augusta among the Celts, Augusta Emerita among the Turduli and Caesar Augusta among the Celtiberi, and other colonies as showing the change. The tribes who have adopted the Roman fashion are called togati, and among these are the Celtiberi, once the fiercest of the natives. The whole trade of the cities of Baetica was with Italy through the Straits; and cities like Carthago Nova kept Rome supplied with precious metals, oil, wine and corn. Thus completely pacified, romanized, and civilized, the people became devoted to the arts of peace and learning. They sent to Rome rhetoricians, philosophers and poets. The cities be-

<sup>1</sup> Phil. i. 13.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 4 (hapax).

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 41 (not in Paulines).

<sup>4</sup> 1 Tim. i. 18; 2 Cor. x. 4.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Tim. i. 18; 2 Tim. ii. 4; 1 Cor. ix. 7; 2 Cor. x. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Pliny, *H.N.*, iv, 22: "Omnes Hispaniae," the three Spanish provinces.

<sup>7</sup> The people who lived near Marseilles were so called by the Massilians.

<sup>8</sup> III, ii, 15.

came famous for luxury and letters. Gades (Augusta Julia) became one of the wealthiest and most luxurious cities of the Empire. In fact, it had become world-famous in the days of Martial<sup>1</sup> (A.D. 40-102). Juba, King of Mauretania, considered it an honour to hold the duovirate there, where there were 500 opulent members of the equestrian order. Even in the days of Horace rich Spanish sea captains were conspicuous in Rome. According to Pliny a citizen of Gades went to Rome just to see the great Livy. It is probable that St. Paul or his companions were brought into touch with some of the Spanish merchants, who had their warehouses and offices in the city, just as Roman companies had their agencies in Spain. It is most likely that many of the ships, to whose constant passing along the western shores of Spain and Gaul and Mauretania Pliny refers, had been built in the dockyards of Hispalis and Gades. But the Spain of Paul's day was equally famous for the literary attainments of its sons, as for the variety and rich abundance of its minerals, home products and exports, and its commercial enterprises. We have here a greater number of distinguished historians, poets and philosophers, chiefly from Baetica, than in any other Roman province. Martial, in an early epigram (i, 61), mentions a few of the most celebrated :

*Duosque Senecas unicumque Lucanum  
Facunda loquitur Corduba*

and he proceeds to mention Canius of Gades, Decianus of Emerita, and Licinianus, a fellow-townsmen of Bilbilis. Ovid was the pupil of Porcius Latro, a poet from Corduba, and also a rhetorician. Junius Gallio of Corduba, and Sextilius Hena, the friend of Cicero, were also Spanish orators. Hyginus, head of the Palatine library under Augustus, was a Spaniard. Seneca, the rhetorician, was also of Corduba. He was the father of Seneca the philosopher, and grandfather of Lucan. His own style is simple, but the style of his declamations is epigrammatic and rhetorical. That style considerably influenced Lucan's and the younger Seneca's, who was also mastered by his phrase. Epigram was also the strong point of Spain's greatest poets—Lucan, whose best work is in his single lines, many of which have been singled out by Quintilian and Martial. Seneca, the philosopher and dramatist, Nero's tutor, whose writings contain many parallel expressions and similar sentiments to St. Paul's, was also from Corduba in Spain. He also excels in pointed epigram. Columella, of the same age, and of Gades, was a writer on agriculture. But Quintilian (A.D. 35-88), of Calagurris, the son of a Spanish rhetor, and a personal friend of the Emperor Galba and his successors, is referred to by Juvenal as the model rhetor in a corrupt age (vii, 186 ; vi, 280), is addressed by Martial as "Glory of the Roman toga" (ii, 90), was the preceptor of Pliny (II, xiv, 9), the very prince of pleaders, speakers, teachers, a purist in style, who recalled men from the imitation of Seneca to the study of Cicero. It would be indeed strange if St. Paul or his companions had not made the acquaintance of some

<sup>1</sup> De Gadibus improbus magister (Mart., i, 41).

one of these Spanish speakers or writers, or others of the same Spanish school. The worship of the Emperor, encouraged by the State, and welcomed by the people, was more real here than elsewhere. An altar was set up to Augustus at Tarraco, in commemoration of his mercy and kindness to the people. After his death the people claimed the right to erect a temple to him, which was not then the expression of mere adulation but of real feeling. Others were erected at Corduba and Emerita to him, and these temples became the seats of the provincial councils. Here was the most suitable soil for the gospel of the Divine Lord and Saviour. Men who could so spontaneously worship a dead benefactor, could easily be induced to worship the living and Divine Christ.

Furthermore, there were, without a doubt, many Jewish traders and tradesmen in the wealthy cities on the coast of Spain. Their skill in labour and finance would have made a way in Spain. Wherever business was done on a big or small scale, that required either minute attention to small details, or wide commercial knowledge, the Jew would naturally be found. The Jew was wherever money was to be made, and wherever money was, and there was plenty of gold and silver in Spain, as the Jews knew full well for many years past. "Now Judas," we read in 1 Maccabees viii. 1-3, "had heard of the fame of the Romans, that they were mighty and valiant men, and what they had done in Spain for the winning of the mines of silver and gold that are there." This historian here refers to the Punic War, but chiefly to the Spanish mines, which would have delighted the heart of the Jew. Moreover, their Semitic neighbours, the Phoenicians and Carthaginians, had founded colonies and settlements in Spain, and Jews would have gone with them as slaves or freemen. Handsome Jewesses would also have accompanied the expeditions. The eastern and southern coasts especially would have offered many advantages to the Jew for trade and business, and in the Roman cities and provincial towns the moneylenders would have a rich harvest. The Edict of Claudius in A.D. 52 would have made many Jews seek a temporary home in the west as well as in the east, in Spain as well as in Greece. When St. Paul made up his mind to visit Spain and expressed that intention (Rom. xv.), he must have known that there were compatriots there, and also synagogues, where he could commence his work of the evangelization of a new district. Spain also offered a welcome to every form of religion, especially to the Oriental mystical cults. At Valentia, Cybele and Attis had a college of Dendrophori. At Olisipo (Lisbon) the mother of the gods was worshipped. The sacrifice of the bull to Cybele in the Taurobolium is mentioned. Isis (the Egyptian) also shares the honours with Cybele, and her worship was popular among the women in the larger towns, chiefly owing to the connection between Africa and Spain. At Tarraco and Valentia she was the patroness of a college of slaves, and at Acci she was the protector of maidens. The purificatory rites, the elaborate ritual and evening services appealed to many. The Syrian moon-goddess, Astarte, is said to have been worshipped

under the name Salambo in Hispalis and Malaca. There was a Mithraeum in Emerita, showing that the worship of Mithras was carried on; and the Basilidean form of Gnosticism, according to Jerome, "laid waste the whole province between the Pyrenees and the ocean" till it came to a head in the days of Priscillian (385), the first Christian to be executed for his religious views by Christians(?). The Ephesian Artemis, as the patroness of Massilia, had her votaries in the Massiliot colonies on the east coast; for example, at Hemeroscopeum there was a temple called Dianium by the Romans. In addition to these objects of worship we have the Roman divinities, chiefly Juno and Diana, the Roman emperors living and dead, and Roma. There were also native divinities of various kinds. All this has been mentioned to show that when an open door was offered to so many various cults, there would have been no opposition to Christianity, which was not persecuted in the days of Nero. It would have attracted many inquisitive people, and also sincere inquirers, some of whom would have held to it with the staunchness for which the Spaniards of those days were remarkable. One may safely say, that St. Paul would have made every inquiry about the province before he contemplated working in it. And if foreign merchants, strangers and even slaves could have introduced their divinities, without let or hindrance, into the province, why should not he have done so? He would have been attracted partly by its importance, partly by its proximity and accessibility. That it was the most important province might easily be proved, both for its teeming population, its wealth, and its fine Roman cities. The breath had scarcely left Nero's body when the Spanish legions created Galba, who was governor of Tarraconensis, Caesar, "showing that a princeps could be made elsewhere than at Rome" (Tacitus), and also the importance of the province dotted over with Roman colonies, the former sites of Roman camps, populated with Roman veterans and their children, among whom the Roman citizenship of Paul would have won an entrance for his message, which was well calculated to win its way to the intellect and heart of men, whose passion for God and truth was not satisfied by the old Roman superstitions revived by Augustus, and the old Roman pantheon, whose domination was even then threatened by the Oriental cults already mentioned. Another point of great importance to a traveller like St. Paul was, that Spain was easy of access by road or sea. Plutarch, in his *Life of Galba* (7), says a messenger brought news of Nero's death in Rome to Galba, who was at Clunia in Spain, 330 miles from Tarraco, in seven days. He would have travelled by the fine road that left Tarraco for Bracara in the north-west. That would have taken him three days, while the distance between Ostia and Tarraco—a comparatively safe voyage between March 5 and November 11—could be covered in four days. Pliny remarked that sails of Spanish flax brought Spain within four days of Italy.<sup>1</sup> Although Tarraco had no harbour, it was well situated for the journeys of

<sup>1</sup> Pliny, XIX, 9.

the prefects to and from Rome. The centre of the Imperial cult, the winter residence of the governors, with its *ara Augusti*, and temple to Augustus and to Rome, graciously permitted by Tiberius to be erected, it would have been a likely station for Paul to commence his work. Martial (x, 104) describes the course of his little book from Rome to Bilbilis, his native town. First he would sail to Tarraco, and then post to Bilbilis, which was reached on the fifth day's travelling by land. It was 224 miles by road from the Tarraconis arces to Bilbilis, and this was not considered fast travelling. There was an excellent government posting system all through Italy and the provinces, which provided at regular intervals means of conveyance for officials. Trading companies also had their own staff of carriers, and private establishments looked after the needs of individuals. Travelling by sea and land since the pirates, of whom Paul's Cilician countrymen were easily first, and brigands, of whom the Spanish natives were chief, had been put down, was a comfort. One could travel fast or slow, to suit one's wishes. Caesar once accomplished a long hilly journey at the rate of 100 miles a day. Others, like the Plinys, preferred a slower rate, while they read, or dictated, or slept in their carriages, for the inns were as bad as the roads were good. Cicero wrote, read and dictated when travelling, see *Att.*, v, 16, where he writes on the road "in cursu" and *Att.*, v, 17, "This letter I dictated 'sedens in rhaeda' (sitting in the car)." When Paul preferred to go by land from Troas to Assos (Acts xx. 13), it does not mean that he walked, although Sophists like Aristides preferred to go on foot, for his time was short, and driving was quite a cheap way of travelling then. As it is by no means certain that he could walk any distance, it is possible that he purposely chose an exhilarating drive in the country to an unpleasant sea journey. Indeed, like Cicero, he may have had a bad crossing. In a letter to Atticus he said, "We preferred to make our journey (*iter facere pedibus*) by land, as we had had a wretched crossing."<sup>1</sup> Had Paul reached Spain he would have had plenty of accommodation in the various towns and villages and also had good roads. Polybius (iii, 39) describes the beginning of this road-system in the days of Scipio. After the government had laid the main roads up and down and across the province, the neighbouring municipalities were bound to lay down any other roads they required, and also to keep all roads in repair, and supply the Imperial posts with their excellent Asturian fast-trotting horses. In his days of captivity in Rome there was much to keep Spain before his mind. The very towels and napkins he used were of Spanish flax. The woollen garments he would wear in winter, his *paenula* or cloak may have been made of Spanish wool which was imported into Italy by the Spanish *centonarii*. His table may have been furnished with the pickled mackerel and tunnies of New Carthage, Spanish mullets and oysters, Spanish wines and bread of Spanish corn. His bedding, too, was probably of Spanish esparto grass, widely used for ropes. He had spent a long and weary time

<sup>1</sup> Catullus, xii, 14.



in collecting a few pounds for the poor Jews in the East. Here was a country with a more generous and trustworthy people and much wealthier. The riches of Spain, its auriferous streams, its silver mines and its gems, would be an attraction. A Jew would appreciate the value of pearls. Most of the precious stones of Revelations xxii. 19-21, were plentiful in Spain. Martial has many allusions to the jasper, the amethyst, and the sardonyx. Sapphires, lapis lazuli, agates, rubies, garnets, pearls and turquoises, etc., were in abundance. His guard's sword-blade may have been tempered in the river Salo. The very *as* he gave for his milk was of Spanish copper, and the *denar* he paid for his lodging of Spanish silver. And whenever an *aureus* passed through his hands he may have fingered Spanish gold. All these considerations may have helped to make him fix his mind upon a visit to Spain.

The statement in the Muratorian Fragment (A.D. 170, *circ.*) that Paul did set out to Spain is supported by the conduct of a contemporary, Apollonius of Tyana, whose life has been recorded by Philostratus. Apollonius visited Rome in A.D. 66, and Nero, on leaving for Greece, gave orders that no philosopher should be allowed to teach in Rome. In consequence Apollonius, who had been released after his trial before Tigellinus, turned westward to Spain. "He intended to see Gades, for he heard some report of the philosophy of the men in those parts and of their proficiency in religion. All his friends followed in his train, highly approving both of the journey and their master." Why should not St. Paul have visited Spain on his release from his first imprisonment?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At another time I hope to be permitted to set forth my reasons for believing in that release.

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