

The beginning of each line (probably from ten to twenty letters in each) is missing. The beginning of the first line undoubtedly contained the first part of Erastus's full Roman name. The second line contained the end of "Aed-" and one or two other words. "Pro aed-" must stand for either *pro aedile* (deputy aedile) or *pro aedilitate* (in return for the aedileship). This would be followed by something like "this street" or "this square." S.P. always means *sua pecunia* (at his own expense). The full translation therefore as far as we can guess it, would be: "----- Erastus, son of -----, of the ----- tribe, deputy aedile (or in return for the aedileship) paved this street (or square, etc.) at his own expense." The words "in return for the aedileship" would mean that the re-paving of some part of the city was made a condition of his appointment to the office of aedile, as explained on p. 107 above.

If this Erastus was the same as St. Paul's friend, the inscription is of great interest, for it is the very earliest inscription referring to a Christian. But there are difficulties. A Christian aedile would meet with exactly the same problem about pagan worship as a Christian quaestor would. Moreover, if St. Paul's Erastus was only a humble *arcarius*, he is not likely to have risen to be aedile. The identification of the two is however by no means impossible. It involves two presuppositions, neither of which can be proved or refuted: (1) That *oikonomos* in Romans xvi, 23, means "agent" and is not the name of an office but only a business relationship. (2) That *pro aed-* in the inscription means "deputy aedile." A deputy might find it much easier to avoid pagan rites than the regular aedile. He might hold the post only for two or three months during which no great festivals, etc. might occur, and there would probably be less ceremonial about the assumption and deposition of the office. It seems possible that a good Christian could, with some dexterity and tact, fill that position.

THE BIBLE IN SPAIN

by DOM ROMANUS RIOS, O.S.B.

ONE of the happiest results of the present Catholic revival in Spain has been a renewed interest in biblical studies and in everything connected with the Bible. Three new reviews have appeared since 1940 with the primary aim of fostering biblical research.

Sefarad specializes in Hebrew philology, as well as in cultural and political questions connected with the Near East. It is published twice a year in Madrid and each volume consists of some 450 to 500 octavo pages. It is now in its seventh year of publication. Its contributors include several well-known scholars, such as Maeso, Alvaro d'Ors, A. Elmaleh, etc. It is, however, a specialist review and is well above the head of the ordinary reader.

There are two other biblical reviews which cater particularly for the interested non-specialist. These are *Estudios Biblicos* and (the more "popular") *Cultura Biblica*. *Estudios Biblicos* is a quarterly which started in 1944; *Cultura Biblica* first appeared in the following year and is a monthly. The former comes from Madrid, the latter from Segovia; but both have their contributors throughout Spain and beyond. These form a powerful team of prominent biblical writers, several of them of international renown. The following list will give an idea of the wide sweep of the editors' net: Enciso (Madrid), Ayuso (Zaragoza), Herranz (Segovia), Ausejo (Sevilla), priests of the pastoral clergy; Ubach and Auge (Palestine), del Alamo (Silos, Burgos) Sola (Chile), Benedictines; Llamas (Escorial) O.S.A.; Arce (Palestine) and Orbiso (Rome), O.F.M.; Colunga (Salamanca), O.P.; Fernandez (Palestine), Bover (Barcelona), Morillo (Dubno), Larranaga (Ona), S.J.; Prado, C.S.S.R.; Peinador, C.M.F. Both *Estudios* and *Cultura* are sponsored by several members of the Spanish Hierarchy under the presidency of Dr. Eijo, Bishop of Madrid. I have several numbers here on my table and I find that the articles are in general short, but quite to the point and full of first-hand information. I have just read in *Estudios* (Vol. V, No. 1) an article on "Inspiration in St. Augustine" by Fr. Rabanos, C.M.F., and another in *Cultura* (January 1947) by Fr. del Alamo, O.S.B., on the *Comma Johanneum*. Both show a complete and thoroughly up-to-date knowledge of their respective subjects. English readers with a little Spanish, who are interested in biblical studies, will certainly derive much profit from these two periodicals.

The biblical revival in Spain has found other outlets. Recently a new Spanish translation of the Bible from the original tongues has been published by Frs. Colunga, O.P. and Nacar, of the pastoral clergy and another of the Latin Vulgate with many illustrations by the same Fr. Colunga, O.P., in collaboration with Dr. Turrado. Moreover, every year a "Biblical Week" is organized at Madrid, and excellent papers are read and discussed. These papers are contributed by competent scholars, mostly professors in the seminaries or in religious orders in different parts of Spain. Last year I attended one of these weeks, and I was struck by the excellent treatment of all the subjects dealt with. Specially prominent among these was the doctrine of the Holy Ghost and His Gifts as contained in the Bible. I happened also to be in Madrid on the last Sunday in September, the eve of St. Jerome which, by order of Bishop Eijo was kept as "Bible Sunday." Copies of the Bible in Spanish in hundreds and thousands, of every size and price, were sold at the doors of all the churches in Madrid, and the same thing took place shortly afterwards in most of the larger towns throughout Spain. Today, Borrow's notorious and tendentious *Bible in Spain* could certainly supply the title for a book of a quite different, and far more trustworthy and informative, character.