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RESULTS OF RECENT HISTORICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH UPON NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.[1]

WHEN I took counsel with myself how I should treat the subject intrusted to me, and what limitations I should fix to the range of topics included in my paper, I soon found that I had no choice. The boundary line was distinctly traced out for me by circumstances.

At the Reading Congress a year ago a paper was read on this very subject by an able Oxford Professor—avowedly a continuation of an inaugural lecture which he had recently delivered in the University. In these two papers he had traversed the whole ground up to the date of the last Congress, and no more competent guide in this province could be found. The term "recent" therefore, though sufficiently elastic in itself, must receive a very strict interpretation from me. I am constrained to confine myself to the discoveries published within the last twelve months. But I take courage in a prophetic passage which I find in the able and exhaustive summary by Professor Sanday, to which I have already referred. "After all," he writes, "we are only picking up the gleanings of bygone ages. We are not reaping a harvest on virgin soil, and yet of late the very gleanings have been so rich, that we cannot refrain from hoping that those which lie before us in the immediate

[1] Read at the Carlisle Church Congress, 1884, and revised, with additions, by the Author.

future may be not less so." This hope has not been disappointed.

Having thus restricted the sphere of discussion, I shall confine myself to two recent discoveries of great interest and importance for the earliest history of Christianity.

I. I will ask you first to accompany me to Asia Minor. It is plain that the students of early Christian history are yet very far from recognising the extreme importance of a thorough investigation of this region. Otherwise there would be no lack of funds to sustain such explorations as those carried on by Mr. Wood at Ephesus and Mr. Ramsay in Phrygia. Asia Minor was the principal scene of St. Paul's missionary labours; it was likewise the chief focus of Christian thought and action in the second century. Yet Asia Minor teems with undiscovered records of the past. It would only be an innocent exaggeration if I were to say that every spadeful of soil turned up would reveal some secret of antiquity. It should be remembered also that in these regions Christianity courted publicity with a boldness of face which it did not venture to assume elsewhere. Thus we may expect to find there not a few memorials of the earliest Christian times buried under the accumulated rubbish of ages. Even where no distinct Christian records are attainable, the contemporary heathen monuments have often the highest value in verifying, interpreting, and illustrating the notices in the Bible or in early Christian history. Let me give one single illustration, showing how an accidental discovery, trivial in itself and apparently alien to all the interests of the ecclesiastical historian, may lead to results of the highest moment. Among the stones disinterred a few years ago by Mr. Wood at Ephesus, was one containing the name and date of a certain obscure proconsul Julianus. Now this proconsul happens to be mentioned in the heathen rhetorician Aristides. Thus M. Waddington was enabled to correct and revise the chrono-

logy of Aristides' life. But it so happens that Aristides elsewhere refers to another proconsul Quadratus—the same who presided at the martyrdom of Polycarp. With these data M. Waddington fixed the time of Polycarp's death some twelve years before the received date, and the inferential consequences, as affecting Polycarp's relations with St. John and thus bearing on the continuity of Church doctrine and practice, have the highest value. More recently the labours of Mr. Ramsay, who has explored the comparatively untrodden regions of Phrygia with the eye of a scholar and antiquarian, have thrown a flood of light on the ecclesiastical arrangements of the district; and still greater things may yet be expected from their continuance, if the necessary funds are forthcoming. In the course of one season he discovered about a dozen Christian monumental inscriptions belonging to the second and third centuries, and dating from the reign of Hadrian onward. To one of these sepulchral inscriptions, second to no early monument of Christianity in interest, I desire to direct your attention. Though not having a very immediate bearing on the Scriptures, yet indirectly, as indicating the common beliefs and practices of the Christians in these early ages, it has the highest significance. In the spurious *Life of Abercius*, Bishop of Hierapolis, as given by the Metaphrast, an inscription is incorporated professing to have been written by the saint for his tomb in his own lifetime. Though much corrupted and written continuously as if it were prose, it is easily seen to fall into hexameter verses. In the course of his explorations in 1883, Mr. Ramsay discovered *in situ* a portion of this very epitaph inscribed on an altar-shaped tomb, not however at Hierapolis on the Mæander, but at Hieropolis, a more obscure city near Synnada.[1] As it

[1] The results of Mr. Ramsay's explorations will be found in two articles in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*. *The Tale of Abercius*, 1882, pp. 339 sq., and *The Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, 1883, pp. 424 sq.

answers in all other respects to the notices in the *Life of Abercius*, Hierapolis in the existing text of this Life is plainly a corruption for Hieropolis. Thus, from being merely a critical puzzle, this epitaph henceforward ranks as a historical monument. Though comprising only twenty-two lines, it is full of matter illustrating the condition and usages of the Church in the latter half of the second century. Abercius declares himself to be a disciple of the pure Shepherd, who feeds his flocks on mountains and plains. This Shepherd is described as having great eyes which look on every side. As we read this description, we may well imagine it drawn from some pictorial representation of the Good Shepherd which the writer had seen in the Roman catacombs or elsewhere. But however this may be, the underlying theology and the reference to the imagery in St. John's Gospel will be obvious. The author says likewise that the Shepherd taught him "faithful writings," meaning doubtless the Evangelical narratives and the Apostolic Epistles. He further sent him to royal Rome, where he saw the golden-robed, golden-sandalled queen, and a people wearing a bright seal. The queen and the seal have been interpreted literally—the one being identified with Faustina, the consort of Marcus Aurelius, and the other explained of the signet rings worn by the higher orders, the senators and knights, among the Romans. On the foundation of this supposed interview with the empress, a legendary story, full of portentous miracles, has been piled. But we can hardly be wrong in giving a figurative explanation to these incidents in accordance with the general character of the epitaph. The queen will then be the Church of the imperial city, and the people wearing the seal will be the Christian brethren signed by baptism. The writer further tells us that he went to Syria, and crossed the Euphrates, visiting Nisibis. Everywhere he found comrades—that is, fellow-Christians. Faith led the

way, and following her guidance he took Paul for his companion—or, in other words, the Epistles of the Apostle were his constant study. Wherever he went, his guide set before him for food fish from the fountain. The fountain here, it is hardly necessary to say, is baptism, and the fish is the Divine *ΙΧΘΥΣ*, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour; so that this is perhaps the earliest example of the acrostic which afterwards became common. This fish is further described as "exceeding large and clean," and as having been grasped by a pure virgin. Faith gives this fish to her "friends to eat continually, offering good wine, and giving a mixed cup with bread." It is needless to dwell on the picture which is here presented. The miraculous Incarnation, the omniscient omnipresent energy of Christ, the Scriptural writings, the two Sacraments, the extension and catholicity of the Church—all stand out in definite outline and vivid colours, only the more striking because this is no systematic exposition of the theologian, but the chance expression of a devout Christian soul. A light is thus flashed in upon the inner life of the Christian Church in this remote Phrygian city. But I would call your attention more especially to two points. First. The writer describes himself as in his seventy-second year when he composes this epitaph. If it was written, as there is good reason to believe, as early as the reign of Commodus, or perhaps even earlier, he must have been born not later than about A.D. 120—some twenty years after the death of St. John, who passed the last decades of his life in Ephesus, the capital of this same province. Thus he would be reared amidst the still fresh traditions of the last surviving Apostle. Secondly. He visits the far West and the far East, and everywhere he finds not only the same Church and the same sacraments, but also, as we may infer from his language, the same, or substantially the same, theology. His faith was the faith of the Catholic Church. This monument

therefore is another stubborn protest against certain modern theories of early Christian history. Each fresh discovery is a fresh nail driven into the coffin of Tübingen speculation.

II. From this interesting monumental epitaph I turn to a record of a wholly different kind. When in the year 1875 Bryennios, then Bishop of Serræ, published for the first time, from a manuscript at Constantinople, the two Epistles of Clement complete, he gave a list of the other contents of the same volume. Among these was a work entitled *The Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles.* As a work of this name is mentioned by Eusebius and others among early apocryphal writings, a hope was excited in the minds of those interested in such studies, that this might be the book alluded to, and that it would throw some light on the vexed question of the origin of the *Apostolical Constitutions.* Eight or nine years however elapsed, and no more was heard of it. At length, at the close of last year (1883), it was given to the world. Its interest and importance have far exceeded our highest expectations. It is found indeed to be the basis of the seventh book of the *Apostolical Constitutions;* but this is the smallest item in our gain. Its chief value consists in the light which it throws on the condition of the infant Church. We are met however with this preliminary difficulty, that it does not carry its date on its face, and we must have recourse to critical inferences in establishing its age. There can be little or no question however, that it is not only the work mentioned by Eusebius, but also the work quoted by Clement of Alexandria as "scripture." In the absence of any direct indication, it has been placed as late as A.D. 140–160 by Bryennios, but I do not doubt that we should be more near the mark in dating it with most English and some German critics somewhere between A.D. 80–110. The reasons are briefly these. In the first place, the Eucharist still remains part of the *Agape.* This follows from the fact that, in connexion with the Eucharistic prayers, directions

are given about what is to be done when the persons present "are filled," "are satisfied." But the separation of the two seems to have taken place about the time of the Bithynian persecution under Pliny (A.D. 112); and in the age of Justin Martyr they are evidently distinct. In the corresponding passage of the later work, the *Apostolical Constitutions*, the words "after they are filled" are replaced by "after their participation," the alteration of usage requiring an alteration of phrase. Again, the picture which it exhibits of the Christian ministry suggests a very early date. The points to be observed are twofold. *First*, as in St. Paul's account in the First Epistle to the Corinthians and in the Epistle to the Ephesians, so here also we have both an itinerant and a localised ministry—the former consisting mainly of apostles and prophets, and the functions of the two shading off into one another, so that it is not easy to draw the line between them; and, *secondly*, the localised ministry is confined to two orders, who are called bishops and deacons, as in the Epistle to the Philippians and elsewhere in the Apostolic writings. Here again the comparison with the *Apostolical Constitutions* is suggestive. Where our document has "bishops and deacons," the later work in the corresponding passage substitutes "bishops, presbyters, and deacons." Thus, when our author wrote, "bishop" still remained a synonym for "presbyter," and the episcopal office, properly so called, had not been constituted in the district in which he lived. Now there is no distinct trace of this first state of things—the itinerant ministry side by side with the localised—after the Apostolic writings, not even in the Apostolic Fathers; while as regards the second point—the identity of meaning in the terms "bishop" and "presbyter"—the latest example is found in Clement's Epistle, which was written about A.D. 95; and in Asia Minor and Syria at all events, episcopacy proper was a recognised institution when Ignatius wrote in the early years of the second century. As

our work however may with some probability be assigned to Alexandria—for all its affinities are Alexandrian—and the march of events was probably not so rapid there as elsewhere, we may perhaps allow the latitude of a few years more. But, it will be urged, the description of the "Two Ways," with which it commences, is obviously plagiarised from the Epistle of Barnabas, and this Epistle cannot be placed as early as this date for the plagiarist would require. In replying to this objection, I would altogether waive the question respecting the date of the Epistle of Barnabas, though I might have something to say on this point. But when I find two sets of critics, each maintaining with equal confidence and with some show of reason, the one that Barnabas borrows from the *Doctrine*, the other that the *Doctrine* is indebted to Barnabas, a third solution is suggested to my mind as more probable than either. May it not have been that neither author plagiarises from the other, but that both derive the matter which they have in common from a third source? The idea of the Two Ways was familiar to Greek philosophers. May not some pious Jew then have taken up this idea and interwoven into it the moral code of the Old Testament, writing perhaps under the mask of a heathen philosopher, who thus was made an unwilling witness to the superiority of Jewish ethics? The adoption of a heathen pseudonym was not an uncommon device with the literary Jew before and about the time of the Christian era, as, for instance, in the maxims of the pseudo-Phocylides and the predictions of the pseudo-Sibyllines. The early date which I venture to assign to the *Doctrine of the Apostles* agrees well with its general character. There is an archaic simplicity—I had almost said a childishness—in its practical directions, which is only consistent with the early infancy of a Church. Such, for instance, is the test which it suggests of truth and falsehood. A true apostle, says the writer, will only remain in a place a

single day or two at most; if a man who sets up for an apostle stays a third, he is a false prophet. Of the genuineness of this document there can be no shadow of doubt. No one could or would have forged it. It serves no party interests; it pleases nobody; it is neither sacramentarian nor anti-sacramentarian, neither sacerdotal nor anti-sacerdotal, but both (at least in appearance) by turns. We may therefore safely use it as a witness; but, while doing so, we must be careful not to attribute to it an authority to which it lays no claim. It pleads no official sanction. Its title is not intended to suggest its authorship. We may accept it as the private venture of some one who desires to set forth his views on moral conduct and Church order, believing them to represent the mind of the Apostles. But at the same time such a document cannot but reflect fairly well the beliefs and usages of the writer's age and country. A further caution is likewise needed. It does not profess to be complete. Its desultory character is apparent, for instance, in the description of the Eucharistic service, which is plainly fragmentary. We cannot therefore safely draw inferences from its silence. This remark applies especially to doctrine, of which it says next to nothing. Observing these cautions, we interrogate it with regard to the New Testament writings. And here the answer is unexpectedly full. The writer quotes large portions of St. Matthew. The Lord's Prayer is given at length; numerous sayings from the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere are introduced; the baptismal formula is quoted. Occasionally also we come across echoes of the characteristic language of St. Luke, as for instance, "What thank have ye, if ye love them that love you" (c. 1), and again "Let not your lamps be quenched nor your loins ungirt, but be ready, for ye know not the hour in which our Lord cometh" (c. 16). On the other hand the coincidences with St. John are less close. The writer speaks of "the holy vine of David"; he uses the

expression "perfect in love"; and in a third passage his language is the echo of an injunction in St. John's Second Epistle. These however, though indicating a sympathy with St. John's modes of thought, are not decisive as to a knowledge of his writings. Nor indeed if we are right in assigning a very early date to this document, are we justified in expecting such knowledge. With St. Paul's Epistles again the writer shows an acquaintance. Coincidences with four of these—Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, and 2 Thessalonians—indicate a free use of the Apostle's writtings. We likewise meet with the precept, "Abstain from fleshly and bodily lusts," which seems to be taken from 1 Peter ii. 11, but may possibly be independent. The testimony however is not confined to the passages actually quoted. The prominence given here, as in the epitaph of Abercius, to the two Sacraments, to these and these only, is the proper sequel to the Lord's parting commands as related in the Gospels. The picture of the Christian ministry again is the continuation of the state of things represented in St. Paul's Epistles. Remembering that the whole work occupies only a little more than six octavo pages, we are surprised at the amount of testimony—certainly much more than we had any right to expect—which it bears to the canon of the New Testament. Moreover, its evidence has a negative value also. In his *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, Dr. Westcott has brought together all the traditional sayings of Christ, and the result shows how very little was reported in the early ages outside the canonical Gospels. This result is confirmed by the document before us. It contains indeed one quotation of which the source is not known, a prudential maxim of almsgiving introduced with the words, "It has been said"; but we have no ground for supposing this to be given as a saying of Christ. All the evangelical matter, so far as we can trace it, is found within the four corners of our canonical Gospels.

These are the gleanings—neither meagre nor unimportant I venture to think—which a single year has yielded in this portion of our field.

J. B. DUNELM.

The inscription of Abercius may be restored with tolerable confidence, by the use of this threefold help; (1) The text in the Metaphrast's *Life of Abercius*. (2) The fragments on the stone itself. (3) The imitation of it on the tomb of one Alexander (A.D. 216) discovered likewise by Mr. Ramsay at Hieropolis. It will run as follows:—

Ἐκλεκτῆς πόλεως ὁ πολίτης τοῦτ' ἐποίησα
ζῶν, ἵν' ἔχω καιρῷ σώματος ἔνθα θέσιν.
οὔνομ' Ἀβέρκιός. εἰμι μαθητὴς ποιμένος ἁγνοῦ,
ὃς βόσκει προβάτων ἀγέλας ὄρεσιν πεδίοις τε,
ὀφθαλμοὺς ὃς ἔχει μεγάλους πάντη καθορῶντας·
οὗτος γάρ μ' ἐδίδαξε...γράμματα πιστά·
εἰς Ῥώμην ὃς ἔπεμψεν ἐμὲν βασίλειαν ἀθρῆσαι
καὶ βασίλισσαν ἰδεῖν χρυσόστολον χρυσοπέδιλον.
λαὸν δ' εἶδον ἐκεῖ λαμπρὰν σφραγεῖδαν ἔχοντα·
καὶ Συρίης πέδον εἶδα καὶ ἄστεα πάντα, Νίσιβιν,
Εὐφράτην διαβάς· πάντη δ' ἔσχον συνομίλους·
Παῦλον ἔχων ἑπό[μην], πίστις πανταχῆ προῆγε,
καὶ παρέθηκε τροφὴν πάντη ἰχθῦν ἀπὸ πηγῆς
παναγέος, καθαρόν, ὃν ἐδράξατο παρθένος ἁγνή·
καὶ τοῦτον ἐπέδωκε φίλοις ἔσθειν διὰ παντός,
οἶνον χρηστὸν ἔχουσα, κέρασμα διδοῦσα μετ' ἄρτου.
ταῦτα παρεστὼς εἶπον Ἀβέρκιος ὧδε γραφῆναι·
ἑβδομηκοστὸν ἔτος καὶ δεύτερον ἦγον ἀληθῶς.
ταῦθ' ὁ νοῶν εὔχαιτο ὑπὲρ σοῦ πᾶς ὁ συνῳδός.
οὐ μέντοι τύμβῳ τις ἐμῷ ἕτερον ἐπιθήσει·
εἰ δ' οὔν, Ῥωμαίων ταμείῳ θήσει δισχίλια χρυσᾶ,
καὶ χρηστῇ πατρίδι Ἱεροπόλει χίλια χρυσᾶ.