
A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

Scripture differs greatly from common biographies. It is indifferent to earthly glories and death-bed scenes. It would seem to say to us—

> "Why do ye toil to register your names
> On icy pillars which soon melt away?
> True honour is not here."

There is, as I have said elsewhere, a spiritual fitness in the lonely, slightly recorded death-scene of the Son of Thunder. There is a deep lesson in the fact that, meekly and silently, in utter self-renouncement, with no visible consolation, with no elaborate eulogy, amid no pomp of circumstance, with not even a recorded burial, he should perish, first of the faithful few to whom, in answer to his request to sit at his Lord's right hand, had been uttered that warning and tender prophecy, that he should drink of the cup and be baptized with the baptism of his Saviour. Nor was the day far distant when the Herods and High Priests would be forced to say of him: "We fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour. How is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints!"

F. W. FARRAR.

EARLY CHRISTIAN MONUMENTS IN PHRYGIA:

A STUDY IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

IV.

MULTITUDES flocked to listen to the ministrations of Aberkios from the neighbouring provinces, Greater Phrygia, Asia, Lydia, and Caria. He restored sight to a noble lady named Phrygella, and afterwards to three old women of the country. Observing that the country stood in need of medicinal baths, to which invalids might resort for the cure of their ailments, he fell on his knees beside a river near the

city, and prayed: immediately a peal of thunder was heard from a clear sky, and fountains of hot water sprang from the earth. The form in which this tale is told owes its origin probably to a reader of the Odes of Horace, or of the Greek original which Horace has imitated in the 34th Ode of the First Book, where the sceptic, who maintained the scientific explanation of thunder as due to mere physical action among the clouds, is converted to believe that it is due to the direct action of Jupiter, by the occurrence of thunder and lightning in a clear sky. Such a touch, like the white garments of the worshippers in the opening scene, seems to betray some familiarity with ancient literature; and incidentally it illustrates what I have said in a preceding article as to the educating influence of the earlier form of Christianity in Phrygia. Also the multitudes from the provinces point perhaps to a reader of the Acts of the Apostles, chap. ii.

Strong belief in the curative and prophylactic properties of mineral springs seems in all ages to have characterized, and still continues to characterize, the natives of Asia Minor. All summer these baths of Hierapolis are still thronged by visitors, many coming from a great distance, some to be cured of ailments, others hoping to prevent them by timely use of the medicinal waters. Two of the provinces of Asia Minor, Phrygia and Galatia, derived their distinctive title Salutaris from the number of hot salutary springs within their bounds. The origin of these healing fountains was naturally attributed to some beneficent divinity by the pagans, and by the Christians to the great saint of the district, just as the origin of the lake of Diocæsareia was in the legend just quoted ascribed to the prayers of St. Artemon. Before the true site of Hierapolis[1] had been discovered, the Berlin geographer, Professor

[1] Different from the greater Hierapolis, described above, beside Laodiceia. There are hot springs at both Phrygian cities of the name.

Kiepert, argued from its name that it must be in the neighbourhood of some hot spring. Hierapolis, "the Holy City," is from its very name a city of religious sanctity, and all the great pagan sanctuaries of Asia Minor were situated in places where some striking natural phenomenon revealed the immediate power and presence of the deity, who ruled and through his prophets advised his people.

The father of deceit, the devil himself, now sought in the form of a woman to get a blessing from the saint; but the latter knew him, and turning hastily away, bruised his ankle against a stone, and gave cause of boasting to the evil one, who delights only in doing injury. The devil then leaped upon a youth of the company, and handled him in miserable wise, till Aberkios pitied him; whereupon the devil left him, threatening that he would make the saint go to Rome. This most puerile incident is introduced to lead up to the central event in the life of the Phrygian saint, his visit to Rome. The fact was known, and some motive had to be found for it consistent with the childish fancy of a miracle-mongering age. The real reason which led to the wide travels of Aberkios is unknown to us; it is probable that it was simply the desire to visit the central Church of the Roman and the Christian world in Rome, and the earliest seats of the Church in Syria, and thus to strengthen the connexion between the provincial Church of Phrygia and the Church Catholic.

I have here anticipated slightly in assuming the historical character of the travels of Aberkios: the reasons which prove that he did visit Rome and Syria for religious purposes will be given below. I anticipate in order to bring out more clearly at this point the way in which the legend grows out of the real facts. The fact that Aberkios went to Rome and to Syria was recorded and remembered. Popular tradition demanded a reason why a man from the interior of Phrygia undertook such journeys; and in ac-

cordance with the character of popular legend the reason must be supernatural. The devil forced him to go to Rome, but his success only produced a more signal manifestation of the saint's miraculous power. When we remember the character of the Montanist movement—Montanus the representative of the old native spirit in religion and in Church government; his opponents, among whom Aberkios was one of the earliest leaders, bent on consolidating and organizing the Church, and on converting the former merely personal ascendency and authority of Church leaders and apostles into the titled and regulated authority of the officials of a hierarchical system—we shall see that the journeys of the saint must have played an important part in forming his policy and in making him the champion of organization and the Church Catholic against the distinctively national Phrygian and separatist tendency of Montanism.

The devil then went to Rome, and took possession of the Princess Lucilla, daughter of Marcus Aurelius, and betrothed to the younger emperor Verus. Verus had gone to the East to conduct a war against the Parthian king Vologeses, and it had been arranged that on his return Aurelius should meet him at Ephesus, and the marriage should be celebrated there in the temple of Artemis. This last detail is suggested by the Christian ceremonial of marrying in church, and is entirely out of harmony with pagan marriage customs. In the whole of this part of the story there is a distinct effort made to accommodate the incidents to actual history. The writer was fairly well read in the history of the second century, but not sufficiently master of the subject to avoid various inconsistencies and chronological contradictions, which need not be here particularized. But even where he is most successful in painting the historical background, he introduces occasional details, like the marriage in a temple, which betray the habits of a later age. Most of this episode gives the im-

pression of learned invention by the composer of the biography, and not of free popular mythology. Probably the only point which belongs to popular tradition is that the saint was made to go to Rome by the wiles of the devil, and there cured the princess. The introduction of the princess is due to a misunderstanding of the real recorded facts that underlie the myth; for the Church is called in the record "the Princess."

Every means was tried to cure the princess. The priests of Rome and Italy, the diviners of Etruria, could not exorcise the demon. We note that the author was educated enough to know the fame of the Etruscans in divination: another detail to mark his character. The devil declared openly that he would not come out unless Aberkios, bishop of the city of the Hierapolitans in Lesser Phrygia, came to him. The emperor at last sent two messengers to fetch Aberkios. The letter which he sent by their hands, addressed to Euxenianus Poplio, governor of Lesser Phrygia, contains one more touch of the inaccurate learning of the author of the biography. It refers to the terrible earthquake at Smyrna, and to the relief which the emperor had given to the sufferers. The words are probably written by some person who had read the petition of Aristides to the two emperors on behalf of Smyrna, and his panegyric after the relief was bestowed, but who was ignorant that the earthquake took place in A.D. 180, only a few months before the death of Marcus Aurelius. Aristides refers to the two emperors who relieved Smyrna, *viz.* Marcus and Commodus; the author of the biography apparently understood them to be Marcus and Verus.[1]

The messengers set out with all speed, and made the

[1] The inference which I once drew ("The Tale of St. Abercius," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 1882, p. 347) from the fact that Euxenianus was also in authority in Smyrna, cannot be sustained, and is rightly rejected by Bishop Lightfoot, *Ignatius and Polycarp*, i., p. 484.

journey from Rome to Brindisi, about 400 miles, in two days![1] The writer was learned enough to know that Brindisi was the usual harbour on the route from Rome to the East, but not learned enough to be aware of the distance. Hence they took ship, and on the seventh day reached the Peloponnesus, whence they travelled with the imperial post horses to Byzantium. The writer knows that Byzantium was the old name of Constantinople, but does not know the road from Brindisi to Constantinople: imperial messengers would have crossed in one day from Brindisi to Dyrrhacchium, and then ridden post along the Egnatian Way by Salonica, a very much shorter land journey. But any reader who knows the geography of the Mediterranean lands, or who looks at a map, will ask why, if the messengers are in a hurry, they should go round by Constantinople. Had the writer lived before the time of Diocletian, he would have made his messengers follow the usual Roman route, across the Ægean Sea to Ephesus, and thence along the great eastern highway by Laodiceia and Apameia. But he lived at a time when all roads in the East led to Constantinople, and all imperial messengers travelled to and from Constantinople; and he makes the characters of his story travel accordingly. From Constantinople onwards he knows his ground, and describes it accurately; the messengers go along the imperial road by Nicomedeia to Synnada, the capital of the province. Arrived at Synnada, they have to leave the main route and take a cross-country path, over a lofty, precipitous ridge of volcanic rock, by which they require guides to conduct them. About the ninth hour they reached Hierapolis and met Aberkios as they were entering the city. The writer throughout shows a great liking for the ninth hour,

[1] Clodius boasted of his speed in coming from the Straits of Messina to Rome in seven days, Cato from Hydruntum to Rome in five days; the distance is a little more than that to Brindisi.

and makes several of the important incidents of the tale take place then. At that hour Aberkios was wont, after spending the day in preaching and teaching, to return home to pray. The messengers asked the way, and Aberkios replied by asking what was their business. One of the messengers, angry at his presumption in questioning a royal official, lifted his hand to strike the saint with his riding whip, but the hand remained outstretched and paralysed, until Aberkios, with his wonted compassion, restored it to health. Aberkios promised to meet the messengers after forty days at the harbour of Rome, and they returned alone, while he took a carriage, and drove down to the harbour of Attaleia, on the southern coast, where he took ship for Rome. The miraculous way in which he provisioned himself and in which his servant was obliged against his own will to behave honestly, is too puerile for repetition: it is obviously due to vulgar popular mythology. The road which the saint took is exactly the one which would recommend itself to a native. Three days after Aberkios the messengers reached the port of Rome, which the writer understands to be actually beside the city: the saint was awaiting them as they landed. They land at a harbour, though it is implied that they returned by the road along which they had previously travelled. The emperor was absent from Rome, on an expedition against the barbarians, who had crossed the Rhine (here we again note the writer's historical knowledge), and Aberkios was brought into the presence of the Empress Faustina. He had the princess brought into the Hippodrome, by which the writer perhaps means the Circus Maximus, but more probably he knew Constantinople and its Hippodrome, and transferred the detail to Rome. Here he ordered the devil who possessed her to leave her, and to take up an altar which stood in the Hippodrome and set it down beside the southern gate of Hierapolis. This same altar was afterwards used as the

tombstone of the saint, and we may gather from this story that the saint was buried by the side of the road which issued through the southern gate of the city. The form of an altar is, as I mentioned in a preceding article, very common among the Phrygian gravestones, and there can be no doubt that the whole story about conveying the altar from the Roman Hippodrome is suggested by the monument, in the shape of an altar, which stood above the grave of the saint. I shall below mention the exact dimensions and shape of the gravestone, a considerable fragment of which is lying before me as I write.

Aberkios refused to accept for himself any recompense from the grateful empress, but asked her to build a bathing-house over the hot springs beside his native city, and to bestow a yearly largess of 3,000 bushels of corn on its inhabitants. This largess continued to be given until the time of the Emperor Julian, by whom it was abrogated. If I am correct in my view as to the date when the biography was composed, it is most probable that some public benefaction to the people of Hierapolis did really exist in the fourth century, and was really confiscated by the Emperor Julian (A.D. 361–63). A writer about A.D. 400 could hardly invent entirely without foundation an incident which belonged to a period well within the memory of his contemporaries. I believe therefore that the existence of a benefaction to the Christians of a Phrygian city, which had lasted some considerable time before A.D. 363, is proved by this biography. In inscriptions 13 and 20 examples of such benefactions on a small scale were given.

After remaining some time in Rome, Aberkios was ordered by God to visit Syria, and the Empress Faustina, yielding to his request, ordered a ship to be prepared for him. A voyage of seven days brought him from the port of Rome to Syria: this impossible statement, compared with the statement quoted above as to the length of the

voyage from Brindisi to the Peloponnesus, illustrates the writer's utter ignorance of geography beyond the bounds of Asia Minor. The saint visited Antioch and Apameia, and crossing the Euphrates made a round of the Churches near Nisibis and through the whole of Mesopotamia. Large sums of money were pressed on him by the Syrian Christians, but were persistently declined by him. At last, on the proposal of a rich and noble Syrian, named Barchasanes, the title of Isapostolos, "Equal of the Apostles," was formally bestowed on him. He then returned through the two provinces Cilicia and Lycaonia and Pisidia[1] to Synnada, and thence to his own home. On the toilsome road between Synnada and Hierapolis he sat down on a stone to rest during the heat of a summer day. Some rustics near him were winnowing their corn in the same way as is still customary in the country, throwing it up in the air and allowing the breeze to carry away the chaff. The brisk northerly wind, which blows on the plateau almost every day for great part of the summer, enables this to be easily done. The chaff was borne by the wind into the face of the saint, who, instead of changing his position, asked the labourers to stop their work, and when they, naturally enough, refused to do so, lulled the breeze and thus compelled them to stop. The rustics employed their enforced leisure in making a meal. Aberkios begged of them a little water, but they refused it with rustic jeers, which after his conduct seem to us not wholly inexcusable. Aberkios then afflicted them with insatiable appetite, which continues to be the case until the present day. The writer does not clearly explain his meaning; but probably some rustic joke about the enormous appetite of the inhabitants

[1] The details are accurate. There were two provinces of Cilicia, Prima (capital Tarsus) and Secunda (capital Anazarbus). Lycaonia was separated from Pisidia about 372. Aberkios would, by the usual route, traverse these provinces and no others.

of some village between Synnada and Hierapolis has given rise to the legend. The picture of the saint sitting on the stone and jeered by the rustics is so obviously modelled on that of Demeter sitting on the Agelastos Petra, "the Stone of Mourning," and ridiculed by the people of Eleusis, that we may probably infer that the same tale was related about the Cybele of Hierapolis as about the Demeter of Eleusis, and that Aberkios has inherited the local legend. But how utterly vulgarised is that pathetic legend in its new form!

The only other incident which is recorded about Aberkios is his production of a spring of drinking water on the top of a high mountain. It must be possible to find whether this fountain exists. I think that a search might discover it, and prove in one further instance that real natural phenomena were popularly accounted for by the prayers of the local saint. Then his approaching death was announced to him in a dream, and he prepared his tomb, engraving his epitaph on the altar which the devil had brought from the Hippodrome in Rome.

The mere recital of the useless, meaningless, and often absurd miracles, and of the historical, chronological, and geographical impossibilities in this legend, is sufficient to show the utterly unhistorical character of the biography. There is a tone of vulgarity and rusticity about it which gives it a rather low place in the class of religious romances to which it belongs. It might fairly be discarded as an unprofitable fabrication, as Tillemont has done. But the epitaph which is given, in a very bad text, at the end of the legend is a remarkable document. Several authorities, such as Bishop Lightfoot and Cardinal Pitra, caught the ring of a genuine second century Christian document in it, and through their remarks[1] it began to attract some notice.

[1] Lightfoot, *Colossians*, p. 54; Pitra, *Spicilegium Solesmense*, iii., p. 553; Duchesne, *Revue des Questions Historiques*, July, 1883, p. 1; Di Rossi most recently and elaborately in *Inscript. Christ. Urbis Romæ*, ii., p. 15.

But it was in very suspicious company. Few spend sufficient time in so habituating their ear to the tone of second century work, as to be able to appreciate the ring of truth in it, and probably the majority would have declined to accept as historical a document which was enshrined in such an obviously unhistorical and late biography. Moreover Aberkios is said to be Bishop of Hierapolis. Now precisely at the time when the biography declares him to have been Bishop of Hierapolis, we know on certain authority that Papias and Apollinaris successively were bishops. The legend makes the imperial messengers go from Synnada to Hierapolis in one day, but Synnada is several long days' journey from Hierapolis, and the principle has been laid down above that fidelity in local features is one of the tests of the better class of religious legend. Attempts which were made to evade these difficulties proved vain, and mere faith in the genuineness of the epitaph would not have convinced the world. But when part of the very altar on which the epitaph was engraved is now in Aberdeen, where it can be examined by all, and when it is found to be unmistakably a second century monument, and finally when the letters on the stone give the true text, which had been corrupted beyond the reach of emendation in all manuscripts of the biography, doubt is at an end.

The biography states that the altar was equal in length and breadth. It can now from actual measurement be said that the altar was one foot nine inches in length and the same in breadth. The total height cannot be determined, but if, as is common, the lower mouldings were exactly of the same dimensions as the upper, the altar must have been two feet eight inches high. The inscription was engraved on three sides of the monument; on the fourth side was a crown, just as on the monument of Aristeas at Acmonia, which was described in a preceding article, No. 13. The first six lines of the epitaph were engraved on the side

opposite to that which bears the crown, the next eleven lines were engraved on the left side, and the remaining five lines on the right side. There is room in the panel on each side for eleven lines, and the reason why so little was engraved on the first and most important side, which is now entirely lost, must have been that symbols or sculpture of some kind occupied part of the available space.

In addition to discovering the original epitaph, which mentions the chief facts in the life of the saint, the systematic exploration conducted by the Exploration Fund has also removed the historical and geographical difficulties which were stated on the preceding page. It has shown that there were two cities named Hierapolis, one the more famous city of the Lycus valley, where Apollinaris was bishop in the time of Marcus Aurelius, the other in the Phrygian Pentapolis, a few miles west of Synnada, but separated from that city by a lofty range of rugged mountains, so that it is a good day's journey of eight or nine hours from the one city to the other. About two or three miles south of this latter city is a fine series of hot sulphurous springs, on the bank of a small river, a tributary of the Mæander. The springs rise within fifty yards of the bank of the stream. Part of the gravestone of Aberkios is still built into the wall of one of the bathing houses, while a smaller part has been brought to this country during the last expedition organized by the Fund. It has been stated above that according to the biography the grave was outside of the southern gate of Hierapolis. This description of the locality shows how natural it was that monuments from the southern road should be carried to build the baths.

The epitaph of Avircius may be thus translated, correcting the text given in the biography by the epigraphic evidence:

29. "*Citizen of the select city, I have, while still living, made this (tomb), that I may have here before the eyes of men a place where to lay my body,*

—I, who am named Avircius, a disciple of the spotless Shepherd, who on the mountains feedeth the flocks of His sheep and on the plains, who hath large eyes that see all things. For He was my teacher, teaching me the faithful writings,—He who sent me to Rome to behold the King, and to see the Queen ('Princess') *that wears golden robes and golden shoes. And I saw there a people marked with a shining seal. And Syria's plain I saw and all its cities, even Nisibis, crossing the Euphrates; and everywhere I found fellow-worshippers. Holding Paul in my hands I followed, while Faith everywhere went in front, and everywhere set before me, as food, the Fish from the fountain, mighty, pure, which a spotless Virgin grasped. And this she* (i.e. Faith) *gave to the friends to eat at all times, having excellent wine, giving the mixed cup with bread. These words, I Avircius, standing by, ordered to be written: I was of a truth in my seventy-second year. When he sees this, let every one pray for him* (i.e. Avircius) *who thinks with him.*[1] *But no one shall place another in my grave; and, if he do, he shall pay* 2,000 *gold pieces to the Romans, and* 1,000 *gold pieces to my excellent fatherland Hierapolis."* [2]

The importance of this document as a summary of faith and ritual in the second century has been shown briefly by

[1] *I.e.* who believes in the One Church, and abhors Montanus.

[2] ἐκλεκτῆς πόλεως ὁ πολείτης τοῦτ' ἐποίησα
ζῶν, ἵν' ἔχω φανερῶς σώματος ἐνθα θέσιν,
οὔνομ' Ἀουέρκιος ὤν, ὁ μαθητὴς Ποιμένος ἀγνοῦ,
οὔρεσιν ὃς βόσκει προβάτων ἀγέλας πεδίοις τε,
ὀφθαλμοὺς ὃς ἔχει μεγάλους καὶ πάνθ' ὁρώντας·
οὗτος γάρ μ' ἐδίδαξε, [διδάσκων] γράμματα πιστά,
εἰς Ῥώμην ὃς ἔπεμψεν ἐμὲν βασιλῆαν 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 συνομήθεις·
Παῦλον ἔχων ἐπόμην, Πίστις πάντη δὲ προῆγε
καὶ παρέθηκε τροφὴν πάντη Ἰχθὺν ἀπὸ πηγῆς,
πανμεγέθη, καθαρόν, ὃν ἐδράξατο Παρθένος ἁγνή,
καὶ τοῦτον ἐπέδωκε φίλοις ἔσθειν διὰ παντός,
οἶνον χρηστὸν ἔχουσα, κέρασμα διδοῦσα μετ' ἄρτου.
ταῦτα παρεστὼς εἶπον Ἀουέρκιος ὧδε γραφῆναι·
ἐβδομήκοστον ἔτος καὶ δεύτερον ἦγον ἀληθῶς.
ταῦθ' ὁρῶν εὔξαιθ' ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πᾶς ὁ συνῳδός.
οὐ μέντοι τύμβῳ τις ἐμῷ ἕτερόν τινα θήσει,
εἰ δ' οὖν, Ῥωμαίοις θήσει δισχείλια χρυσᾶ,
καὶ χρηστῇ πατρίδι Ἱεράπολι χείλια χρυσᾶ.

I am obliged to differ in a number of points from the text as given by Lightfoot and Di Rossi (who differ from each other also in various details). The chief variations are mentioned below.

Bishop Lightfoot in THE EXPOSITOR, January, 1885, p. 1 ff., and very elaborately by Comm. di Rossi in the preface to vol. ii. of his *Inscriptiones Christ. Urbis Romæ*. We have in it the writings of faith, the Church as queen in her golden attire, the central importance of the Roman Church, the seal of baptism, the Church of Syria, the intercommunion of the members of different Churches in different lands—all are associates of one Church and practise the same ritual—the importance of St. Paul's writings, faith as the guide of life, the holy sacrament of bread and wine as the body of Christ, Christ conceived by the spotless Virgin, Christ born afresh in the fountain of baptism,[1] and the name applied to Christ is the symbolical fish, the well-known anagram (of which this is one of the earliest known examples) of the initial letters, *Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς Σωτήρ*. The document is also interesting as an example of the sacred poetry of the second century, and it has been compared with the famous inscription of Autun, which was discovered in 1839. The latter is a much later document,[2] but the first six lines clearly belong to an early period (probably the same period as the epitaph of Avircius), and are merely reproduced by the composer of the epitaph proper. The remarkable similarity of tone and spirit in the two documents furnishes one further proof of the close relations between the Church of southern Phrygia and the Church of Gaul, to be placed alongside of the epistle of the Churches of Lyon and Vienne to the Churches of Asia and Phrygia, the Lyonnese martyr Alexander the Phrygian, etc.

The phrase in the second line, "before the eyes of men" (*φανερῶς*), shows the intention of the writer. The epitaph was intended to be the imperishable record, amid the

[1] Di Rossi aptly quotes a Byzantine hymn, *Πηγὴ ὕδατος πηγὴν πνεύματος ἀνέλαβε*.

[2] Di Rossi however seems to me to be quite right in arguing that it is in the style of A.D. 300, rather than of the fifth century.

most solemn and impressive surroundings, of the testimony of Avircius in favour of the one and indivisible Church catholic, and against the separatism and the nationalism of Montanus. During his life Avircius took care that he should continue after his death to preach the doctrine of unity, and to protest against the Montanists, even to the extent of refusing their prayers on his behalf: let them only who think with him pray for him.[1] This important word is preserved to us by the contemporary epigraphic evidence; and it is very unlucky that Di Rossi and Lightfoot have preferred the feeble reading of the MSS. to the decisive testimony of an inscription which will be quoted below. The phrase "in due time" (καιρῷ), loses all the individuality that suits the situation, and substitutes a commonplace platitude. The epitaph, as it has now been interpreted, belongs to the height of the Montanist controversy, and can hardly be dated later than A.D. 192, when the treatise against Montanism was dedicated to Avircius by one of his neighbours and friends. In respect of the date, I am glad to agree absolutely with the two high authorities whom I have just quoted, against Duchesne and Bonwetsch, who prefer a date about A.D. 215. The latest date then that can be assigned for the birth of Avircius is A.D. 120.

Before attempting to draw the conclusions that suggest themselves from the new evidence about the position and policy of Avircius, I shall put together here some remarks on the text of the document which is our chief authority.

Since the complete text of the epitaph of Avircius was published by me (*Academy*, Mar. 8th, 1884), other versions by Bishop Lightfoot and Comm. di Rossi have been published

[1] This bitter intolerance is paralleled by the treatise dedicated in 192 to Avircius, in which the anonymous anthor, a neighbouring presbyter, praises certain orthodox martyrs who refused, even in the immediate prospect of death, to have any communion with their Montanist fellow martyrs.

(THE EXPOSITOR, 1885, p. 11; *Ignat. Pol.*, i., p. 480; *Inscr. Christ. Urb. Rom.*, ii., preface). I regret to be unable to agree with the text as restored variously by these scholars, and in most points the text given in the *Academy* (in which I had the help of Mr. Bywater and Prof. Sanday) is I believe preferable. The recent texts proceed, if I may say so, on an uncritical principle; no attempt is in them made to explain the errors of text in the manuscripts, whereas the text as reconstituted must explain the origin of the errors. These errors are, I think, due partly to actual false readings of the monument (which the biographer acknowledges to have found difficulty in reading), and partly to attempts to explain and modernize the text, which caused the substitution of common forms for dialectic and poetic forms, and of marginal explanatory glosses for unusual expressions in the text. The rule then should be, that where any manuscript authority exists for a dialectic variety or unusual form, the presumption is that it was written by Avircius.

In the first place, as to the spelling of the name, all the three versions agree in accepting the authority of the MSS., and reading Ἀβέρκιος. The name however is Italian, as will be proved below. The Latin Avircius or Avercius was transliterated in Greek during the second century in accordance with universal practice Ἀουίρκιος or Ἀουέρκιος. During the third century, Greek β began to represent Latin *v*, and the two inscriptions 300–400 A.D. have Ἀβίρκιος. The saint must have written either Ἀουέρκιος or Ἀουίρκιος, and as all MSS. of the biography and all the Menæa, etc., quoted in the *Acta Sanctorum* (Oct. 22nd, p. 485 ff.), have Ἀβέρκιος, the biographer probably saw Ἀουέρκιος on the monument. I have however written Avircius on the authority of the treatise quoted by Eusebius, and of inscriptions 31, 32.

The chief variations which I think are needed from the text as constituted by Bishop Lightfoot are the following:

Line 2. *Καιρῷ* of the MSS. is falsely read from the stone; the epitaph of Alexander gives *φανερ*[*ῶς*], which as I have rendered seems to give also a better though less obvious sense. *Κερῷ* is an easy error for [*φα*]*νερῶ*[*ς*].

3. For *εἰμι* I read *ὢν, ὁ*: the MSS. have *ὁ ὤν*, a transposition of some scribe; *εἰμι* is a purely modern alteration.

4. *Οὔρεσι*, MSS.; Lightfoot corrects to *ὄρεσιν metri causa*. But the ordinary form *ὄρεσιν* would never have been altered to the unusual and unmetrical *οὔρεσι*. Avircius wrote *οὔρεσιν* at the beginning of the line, in an order which was a favourite device with him (cf. 5, 7). A scribe restored the prose order of words, destroying the metre, and the modern editor eliminated the poetic form and restored the common form *ὄρεσιν* for the sake of the metre.

5. *Καθορόωντας*, MSS. Avircius wrote *καὶ πάντα ὁρόωντας*; a scribe, omitting *καί* accidentally, inserted it above the line, a most fruitful source of error in ancient MSS. It was then misplaced by the next copyist, and written *καθορόωντας*. Finally metre was restored by reading *πάντῃ*, which is twice used by Avircius. Lightfoot prefers *καθορῶντας*.

6. There is a gap in this line: Cardinal Pitra restores *τὰ ζωῆς*, which gives an admirable sense, "the faithful writings of life"; but it is perhaps too bold to introduce without any authority such an idea into the text. And how should such a reading have disappeared without leaving a trace? I insert *διδάσκων*, which completes the sense, adds no new idea, and explains the omission, for the word is readily dropped by a scribe after *ἐδίδαξε*.

7. *Βασίληαν*, as Lightfoot rightly shows, was understood by the biographer, when he transcribed the epitaph, as a feminine in the sense of empress. Lightfoot also rightly maintains that a mystic and figurative sense for the passage was intended by Avircius. In both these points I was wrong in my first interpretation. But I still hold that such a writer as Avircius could not have written *βασίληαν* for

βασίλειαν, and repeated *βασίλισσαν* in the next line in the sense of "queen." Moreover the rhythm, *βασιλῆαν ἀθρῆσαι καὶ βασίλισσαν ἰδεῖν*, clearly demands that the two clauses shall exactly balance each other. *Βασιλῆαν* then I still maintain to be a correct poetic variety of the accusative of *βασιλεύς*, to which many parallels can be quoted. What the mystic sense is (such as Lightfoot rightly requires) that lies in "the King" and "the Queen" whom Avircius went to Rome to see, I must leave to others to determine; but I may add that Lightfoot's text also fails to give a mystic sense to *βασίληαν*.

11. The correct text is suggested by Lightfoot in a note, but not given in his text. It is *συνομήθεις*. The word must have been misread on the stone. My original suggestion is wrong.

12. My restoration *ἐπό[μην]* is disliked by both Lightfoot and Di Rossi, but they confess themselves unable to discover anything better. They seem to understand *Παῦλον ἔχων* as "with Paul as my comrade," whereas I translate it "holding (the writings of) Paul in my hands," and thus I think the line has an unexceptionable sense. The antithesis *ἐπόμην* in penthemimeral cæsura and *προῆγε* at the end of the line is such a common device in hexameters as to justify itself in this case forthwith.

14. I cannot agree with Lightfoot in doubting the reference to the Virgin Mary.

18. *ἑβδομήκοστον*, with its scansion as a four-syllable word, is necessitated, and may be palliated by the slurring of the second syllable.

19. *ὁ νοῶν* followed by *ὁ συνῳδος* seems to be too awkward for the style of Avircius. I think the biographer falsely read *N* for *P*, and that the true text is, as I have given, *ὁρόων*. The phrase is then more characteristic of epitaphs, more vigorous in sense, and more on a level with the grammar of Avircius. *ὁ συνῳδός* Lightfoot takes in the

sense of Christian: this seems weak. It means "anti-montanist."

19. *εὔξαιτο ὑπὲρ Ἀβερκίου*, MSS. The epitaph wrote, in accordance with a most frequent usage in these documents, *ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ*; this was explained by a gloss *Ἀβερκίου*, which crept into the text and supplanted the pronoun. *ὑπέρ μου*, as given by Lightfoot, is naturally and readily intelligible, and would not have led to any marginal explanation.

20. Lightfoot deserts the inscription of Alexander completely. Di Rossi, on the other hand, inflicts on Avircius a seven-foot line. It is to me inconceivable how the latter can attribute such a line to a writer capable of composing this fine epitaph. Alexander certainly gives a seven-foot line, but he was a half-educated native Phrygian: he found a somewhat poetic phrase *Ῥωμαίοις* in the text which he was copying, and substituted for it the regular technical phrase *Ῥωμαίων ταμείῳ*.

22. I refuse to attribute to the composer of this epitaph such a metrical enormity as *Ἱεροπόλει χείλια*. I have for years insisted on and quoted examples to prove the principle that *Ἱερόπολις* is the native Phrygian, Cappadocian, and Syrian name, but that wherever Greek education spread the true Greek form *Ἱερὰ Πόλις* takes its place. Thus Hierapolis is the invariable form in the Lycus valley,[1] which was thoroughly Græcised, and the city of Avircius always becomes Hierapolis in ecclesiastical documents. Avircius, a well educated man, used the Greek form, and in verse considered himself justified in forming a dative *πόλι*, or perhaps in using a vocative. He probably intended the single word *Ἱεράπολι*, and not the two words *Ἱερᾷ Πόλι*. Alexander substituted the local name *Ἱεροπόλει*.

Di Rossi thinks that the biographer omitted the conclusion of the epitaph, containing the date and a salutation

[1] Except in one or two of the earliest coins, before it was completely penetrated by Greek education.

to the passers by. This is not probable. The date is supplied by the age of the writer, and the usual salutation is represented by the request for the prayers of the orthodox, which shows that ὁρόων is required in order to correspond to the ordinary phraseology of epitaphs: "Let every orthodox person who sees this prove his orthodoxy by praying for him that is buried here."[1]

W. M. RAMSAY.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

VIII. THE GOSPEL OF REST (CHAP. IV.).

THE interest of an ordinary reader of our epistle is apt to flag at this point, in consequence of the obscurity overhanging the train of thought, and the aim of the whole passage relating to a "rest that remaineth." It helps to rescue the section from listless perusal to fix our attention on this one thought, that the Christian salvation is here presented under a third aspect as a rest, a sabbatism, a participation in the rest of God; the new view, like the two preceding, in which the great salvation was identified with lordship in the world to come and with deliverance from the power of the devil and the fear of death, being taken from the beginning of human history as narrated in the early chapters of Genesis.

One aim of the writer of the epistle in this part of his work was doubtless to enunciate this thought, and so to identify the gospel of Christ with the Old Testament gospel of rest. But his aim is not purely didactic, but

[1] The interpretation of Geraios suggested in the second of these papers must be abandoned, and the more obvious interpretation as member of *Gerousia* is to be preferred. The title occurs a third time in a Phrygian inscription at Hierapolis.