

supposed needs of their particular section of the (Reformed) Christian Church, and more of those of students in general, and of the Church that is to be ?

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### ARCHÆOLOGY AND CRITICISM.

IN all enquiries into the history of a remote past, criticism and archæology generally go hand in hand. They mutually control and further each other, and they ought as a rule to point to similar conclusions. But at present that does not seem to be the case. A slowly widening divergence in the tendency of Archæology and Criticism has been manifesting itself, until they threaten to stand opposite each other as irreconcilable foes. In the main, Archæology has been decisively pushing back the border line of the historic period to always remoter periods. Criticism, on the other hand, has been tending, especially in regard to religious history, to the view that everything before the 4th or 5th century B.C. is so obscure that we must resign ourselves to very partial and conjectural opinions regarding it. The one has manifested a growing tendency to esteem the good faith and accuracy of early tradition and ancient authors always more highly; the other has grown suspicious to such a degree that it admits nothing to be true in these but what it is actually compelled to admit. The extreme results of this latter attitude are seen in Darmesteter's recent declaration that the Zendavesta belongs to an age immediately preceding our era, or to an even later date; in the assertions of some French scholars that the Vedas are not much anterior to Alexander the Great; and in the almost helpless drift of Old Testament critics to a position regarding the dates of Israelite literature which apparently will not be very greatly caricatured in Vernes' view that all the prophetic writings

are the product of the two or three centuries before Christ. It has thus become a very grave and important question which of these opposite tendencies, the tendency to accept ancient tradition and ancient literature, except where they can be disproved or rendered improbable, or the tendency to reject them, except where they can be proved, is the more wholesome and the more likely to be a guide to truth. For students of the Old Testament this is the question of the hour, and in the history of the criticism of the Homeric Poems, and of the Schliemann archæological investigations, I think we may find materials for an approximate if not a decisive answer. Exceptionally good materials for the study of this history have come into the hands of all by the publication of Dr. Schuchardt's summing up and criticism of Schliemann's results in his recent admirable book, *Schliemann's Excavations*, and in Prof. Perrot's luminous articles on Mycenæan civilization in the February number of the *Revue des deux Mondes* for this year. Without pretending to any authority on Hellenic questions, and relying only on the general agreement of Hellenic scholars, I think it may be possible to show that the truth lies with the archæologists, and that as in regard to Homer, so also in regard to the Old Testament, trust, and not distrust, is the justifiable attitude even on purely literary and historic grounds.

## I.

A century ago the critical view of the Homeric poems was, for the first time in modern days, advanced by Wolf. In its essence, his contention was that they were not the work of Homer, or of any single author; that they were not, except in a very secondary sense, contemporary with the civilization they describe, so that we could not authoritatively learn from them the state of early Greece, and that their original basis was a number of separate poems, which had

been welded into a whole by an editor at a comparatively late date. As soon as this theory was broached, the bulk of Homeric scholars took position strongly against it, while a minority of younger and more adventurous men welcomed it, and carried it farther than Wolf, who was conservative as well as critical, would have approved. That was in Germany. In England, for the most part, the new theory was disregarded, and long after it had received serious consideration from German scholars it was looked upon by English Hellenists as a merely provincial freak or curiosity. But the conflict between the two views went on unremittingly for years, and bit by bit the critical view made its way. At length, when victory in Germany was practically assured, it began seriously to affect English opinions. When that took place, English scholars followed rapidly in the footsteps of the critical German school, until there was scarcely any Hellenist of repute who did not admit that the homogeneity and contemporaneousness of the Homeric poems could not be maintained. Under these circumstances, opinions could not but vary greatly as to the historic value of the poems. The more sceptical asserted that they had no basis in fact, that there never had been any such Troy as they describe, and that the earliest parts of them were centuries later than the events they professed to narrate. They were, in short, pure works of imagination, in which the background of daily life which was necessary had been supplied by transferring to pre-Dorian times the civilization and the circumstances of the Ionian Greeks in Asia Minor. On the other hand, a very few still held that the poems were in the main the work of one man, were contemporary witnesses as to the state of early Greece, and that all that was doubtful in them could be explained by the supposition of a later edition, which had left the original work practically untouched. But a greater number held a middle position. Admitting the composite character of the

poems, they fell back upon Wolf's original supposition. They asserted that there had been a Homer, who had written a much smaller but connected poem on the subject of the Siege of Troy, and had fixed the outline so that the succeeding writers who filled up this outline felt themselves entirely controlled by it. This was the end of nearly 100 years' debate. Almost every possible combination of hypotheses had been suggested in its course, but opinion had run finally into these three channels, and it seemed as if further progress would be impossible with the materials available, and that no definite, reliable, generally accepted conclusion could be reached.

Just at this point, however, an enthusiastic believer in Homer, Dr. Schliemann, determined to put the matter to the test of excavation. He trusted Homer, believed that his poems, especially the Iliad, rested upon clear and definite acquaintance with ancient days, and that the great twin-poems had been the work of one man. Having, fortunately, acquired enough of money to make him independent of any extraneous aid, he set to work to dig on the very spots which the Homeric poems celebrated as the sites of cities and castles. His first great effort was at Hissarlik on the Troad, which among the people was called Troy, and which in Roman times had been regarded as the site of the famous city. After arduous, and at first almost futile labours, he succeeded in laying bare a series of remains of ancient towns, superimposed one upon the other, dating from Roman times back to a pre-historic period. In the earliest but one of these, he thought he recognised the Troy of Homer, a town as Homer makes Troy to be. But that difficulty has since been set aside. But it was soon pointed out that the remains were far too small for such. According to Schuchardt, what was here found was the citadel or acropolis, containing the palaces of the royal clan with the houses of their retainers, while on the plain below, as

Homer evidently implies when he makes Hector, II. VI. 392, pass through the *μέγα ἄστυ* before reaching the outer gate, lay the city proper. On the citadel hill were found the remains of a royal palace, nearly resembling the Homeric royal houses, and of gateways of exactly the type to which the Skaian gate belonged—towers through which the roadway passes, with chambers above, from which non-combatants might look down upon the strife. In the plain, again, “every trench dug in the supposed site of the lower city has yielded countless potsherds, similar to those of the first and second cities” on the hill. Moreover, it has been discovered that the buildings on the citadel hill did not perish by slow decay, but were suddenly destroyed by a great conflagration. Everywhere the sun-dried bricks are found burned on the exposed side, and in the ruins of one of the houses the skeleton of a young girl was found, leaning against the wall, covered with wood cinders. Clearly, therefore, the hill of Hissarlik and the plain at its foot had been in very early times the site of an important city, and in its second period the citadel had been defended by “a stately circuit of fortifications protected by gates and towers such as are found on no other site on the Troad or on the Asia Minor coast at so early a date.” At that time, therefore, the city must “have held a prominent position not only on the Troad, but also on the whole of that Asia Minor coast, that is, in the maritime interest of the Archipelago. It was certainly the capital of the country, and on account of its important position in the straits between two seas it would be called upon to enter actively into wider relations.”<sup>1</sup> It was in short a strong piratical and commercial city. Nor is that all that these excavations have revealed. The art of the place, as seen in its architecture, its ornaments, etc., occupies “a middle position between the three great civilizations of the ancient world, the

<sup>1</sup> Schuchardt, p. 90.

Assyro-Babylonian, the Egyptian, and the Greek." From Assyria its builders got their habit of building in sun-dried brick. From Egypt they learned to "scarp" their walls, a practice which originated there. Finally, in form the Trojan gates and palaces entirely correspond with what is found at Tyrus and Mycenæ. As for the ornaments, those of ivory and jade prove intercourse with Central Asia; those of gold are made after the same model as those of Mycenæ; while the shape of some of their finer vessels are distinctly Egyptian. But their "every-day utensils, such as cooking pots, water jars, cups and spoons, are made on the spot." These, with such of their gold ornaments as are not early Greek in style, have a quite individual character. Finally, the relations with Mycenaean art are found only towards the end of the period in which the second city flourished. Everything consequently combines to characterize these "Trojans," if we may so call them, as a people in a transitional stage of culture. They had a wide commerce, but were themselves too long separated from the purely Asiatic races to work in the Asiatic style, and had too recently come into contact with Greece to have fully adopted in all things the Greek manner.

Such is the position of the "Trojans" according to the Schliemann discoveries. We turn now to the Greek side, and find the same or even greater correspondence between the poems and the facts. At Mycenæ, from which the leaders of the expedition against Troy are said to have come, remains of a still more remarkable character have been discovered, including a citadel of immense strength, and a palace of the same character as that discovered at Hissarlik. Evidently here too the ruling clan, with their retainers and dependents, occupied the citadel as their quarter, and had their tombs there. At the foot of the citadel spread the lower city, in which the other clans had their dwelling, each in its own quarter, and with its own burying place, and the

whole remains are of a date which ranges from 1500 B.C. to 1100 B.C. Just as Troy must have stood far above any other city of the time on the shores of Asia Minor, so Mycenæ must have excelled all the cities of Greece at the same time. By its position, too, it received the commerce of both the Corinthian Gulf and of the Southern Mediterranean, and enjoyed a wealth and culture of a most unexpected kind. Mycenæ and Troy, therefore, were political and commercial rivals at this remote time, and it is even conjectured that the piratical habits of the Trojans were the real cause of the Greek attack. Further, in the tombs at Mycenæ were discovered gold ornaments of the greatest value, beautifully wrought, just as the poems describe them, diadems and pendants, crosses and earrings, hairpins and necklaces. There were, too, daggers, inlaid after the manner of the shield of Achilles. On these, hunting scenes were depicted with extraordinary power and truth to life, variously coloured metals being used with marvellous skill. In every respect Homer's account of early Greek art is justified, and what was once regarded as conclusive evidence of late date, is now shown to be an exact statement of what existed at that early time. The discoveries at Mycenæ have put it beyond reasonable doubt that there was here a civilization exactly such as the poems describe, and the conclusion seems inevitable that some of the writers who produced the poems must have lived in that period, or so shortly afterwards that the full details concerning it could be, and were, handed down in a perfectly reliable manner. In other words, these discoveries show that with regard to early Greek life and civilization some portions of these poems have all the value of history, as Prof. Jebb, sceptical and cautious as he is, entirely admits. In early Greece, therefore, before the Dorian invasion, which is generally dated 1100 B.C., there existed along the Eastern shores and in the islands of the Ægean sea, a civilization of a high

kind, yet totally different, and in many respects superior to either the Dorian civilization or that of the Ionian cities of Asia Minor, both of which arose later. In architecture it is superior to the Dorian, for there are no Dorian citadels, and Mycenaean art is superior to anything the Dorians did in any later time. On the other hand, it is different from Ionian civilization in this, that while the Ionians were keen and adventurous merchants, entirely democratic in feeling, the Achæians, as we may call the pre-Dorian Greeks, were groups of aristocrats, who cared little for commerce, which they left to the Phœnicians, and lived mainly on the produce of the soil, which their serfs cultivated.

Now these facts are remarkable enough in themselves, but their main importance for us is the general inference which can rightly be drawn from them as to the character of Homer. The first hasty deduction was that in every detail the poems were simply a verifying of history, and that the very castles and treasuries and graves of Priam and Agamemnon had been discovered. But further consideration has shown that no such view is tenable. In many things the poems are imaginative enough, they had not been poems else. As Prof. Jebb has pointed out, if the Achæians are rightly depicted, the Trojans cannot be so, for in manners, customs, thought, and speech, the Trojans differ hardly at all from them. Nevertheless conclusions of a very important kind can be drawn with safety from the results of these excavations. First of all, the poems have preserved a perfectly accurate view of Greek civilization as it existed about 1300 B.C., for the life they describe is pre-Dorian. Secondly, they cannot as a whole have been originally produced in Ionian Asia Minor, for no Ionian Greek could have had such accurate knowledge of pre-Dorian Greek life as they exhibit. Even if such an one had received a tradition of it, he could not have reproduced



it with such truth of detail without an artistic skill and an archæological knowledge which, so far as is known, no one then possessed. But thirdly, there are in the poems many passages which reveal a much later time. Putting aside Mr. Walter Leaf's attractive speculations in his introduction to Schuchardt's volume, as to the possibility of the bulk of the poems having been originally written in an Æolic dialect of an ancient type, and so being possibly contemporaneous with the Mycenean civilization, the only supposition that will meet the case is that the oldest portion of the poems must go back to the Achæan time. Fourthly, seeing that the later parts are in the main true to the Achæan background, the earlier portions must have had a unity and completeness of their own, which drew the lines for later compilers and editors so sharply that they too had to limit themselves by the original outline. There was, therefore, a Homer, who gave to the poems the unity universally felt in them by every poetic and understanding reader, but there has also been conspicuously and effectively at work upon them, a later hand or hands, as the critics always said. The net result, therefore, seems to be that both parties to the discussion in regard to the age and authorship of Homer have been right in what they affirmed, and wrong in what they denied. The traditionalists have been justified in their persistent refusal to believe that the narrative of the poems was a purely baseless and imaginative one, with no relation to the facts of ancient life at all, and in their adherence to the view that there was a unity notwithstanding all diversities which implied one imaginative mind as the first source of the whole. But they were wrong in denying the existence of huge additions and interpolations, and in asserting that the whole poems as they have come down to us, could have been the work of one mind and one period. As a matter of fact the central points of their position can now be maintained only

by admitting that such additions of foreign but related material do exist. For the marks of Ionian influence are so strong that if Homer must be all of one time and from one hand then it must be all of the Ionian time. But the critics are left in no better case. Their scepticism has been proved to be altogether excessive. Much that they regarded as purely imaginative and impossible at so early a date as the Homeric poems were said to belong to has been proved to be simply a most accurate account of the realities of precisely that early time. Their belief that originally there was no unity in the poems at all, that they were simply a mass of separate ballads dealing with the deeds and adventures of separate heroes, into which unity was brought only by the latest editors is rendered in the last degree improbable. Further, their idea that these ancient singers and writers made good their utter ignorance of the past by transferring to it the circumstances of their own time, receives no countenance. But their main contention that there was in the poems too great diversity both of matter and style to permit of the supposition that one author had produced our Homer at one time, has been proved to be true, and their researches have been the means of pouring a flood of light upon the genesis and growth of the immortal work with which they had to do. In fact, it looks as if both the critical and conservative tendencies were justified, the one for its acuteness in noting differences, the other for its firmness in holding fast to that unity which, as a whole, the poems asserted for themselves.

## II.

With regard to the critical theories of the Old Testament, the course of things has been very similar. In details, of course, there have been differences, the greater being this, that in the Old Testament criticism has had to do mainly with history and law, while in Homer all has been poetry.

But in broad outline the course of things has been almost parallel. A century ago the critical reaction began here also. At first, too, most students of the Old Testament were hostile, while a minority laboured unweariedly to establish the critical position. Finally, Germany was won for the new views, and at length England tardily entered upon the field. We are now at the stage when English opposition has almost wholly broken down, so far as special and qualified Old Testament scholars are concerned, while the traditional views are still held by the great mass of Bible readers, even among the educated. As to the theories held also, the analogy is close. Here in regard to the Scriptures, as there in regard to Homer, some still hold that Moses actually himself wrote the Pentateuch, that the order of the books as they stand in our Bible is in the main the true one, and that we have written contemporary evidence at least for all that took place in the history of Israel from the time of the Exodus. The critical school of Kuenen and Wellhausen, on the contrary, assert that except the Song of Deborah, we have no contemporary documents before the 9th century B.C., that scarce any Scriptural book is homogeneous, that they have been made up, the prophetic books as well as others, of a number of different documents put together by later editors, that they have been worked over and fitted into each other, and that all they tell us of the legislation, the worship, and the history of Israel, in times before the writing prophets, rests merely on tradition, varied and shot through with details arrived at by transferring to that past all that was thought essential in the present of the various writers and compilers. In that way we are deprived of all reliable documents for the earlier history. For the most part, of late the conflict of opinion has been between these two extreme views, but during the century since criticism began, almost every possible interpretation of the documents has been tried, and no decisive result seemed

likely to emerge. There is, indeed, a middle view which is strongly represented in Britain—a view which accepts the composite character of the Scriptural books, which accepts also the later editors, but which is very slow to believe that the whole of a nation's popular tradition can be disposed of as Wellhausen and Stade dispose of them. Men holding that position are inclined to believe that traditions such as those of the great deliverance from Egypt, of the legislation of Sinai, as to the life and work of Moses, are not mere baseless stories, that they do rest upon authentic facts, that the history of Israel did in those times, and from the hands of Moses, receive an impress which has proved to be essential and permanent, and that we should be much nearer the truth, if that were the choice, in accepting these narratives to their most trifling detail than in rejecting them because of minor difficulties or general presuppositions. But *decisive* facts in their form there were none. But here, too, archæology has come to our aid. As yet the results have been neither so striking nor so decisive as the Schliemann excavations have been. The enormously wider field, the greater complexity of the problem, and the relatively small amount of excavation made, have prevented that. In the main, however, the direction in which the results of excavation point is the same as that of the Schliemann excavations. The evidence of the Assyrian and Egyptian inscriptions has brought the earliest periods of Israel's existence as a nation into the full light of history, and they have given us documents contemporary with every decisive period of Israel's development. Yet the result has been to increase the general confidence in the Scriptural writers as men entirely set upon accuracy so far as that was possible to them. Whatever else they may be or do, they at least write in entire good faith, and, so far, I doubt whether one instance can be cited in which the monuments or inscriptions have favoured the idea that the circumstances of later

times have been transferred to earlier. Moreover the Tel-el-Amarna tablets have shown that writing could easily have been learned, and most probably was learned, by Israel's leading men almost as soon as they came out of the desert, and that in any case there were numerous scribes who could have been hired to make records. It is, therefore, *a priori* likely that official documents belonging to the earliest time may have existed at the time when history began to be written. Further still, in the case of the 14th chapter of Genesis, evidence is accumulating that both as regards the warlike expedition from Babylonia, and the religious character and name of Jerusalem, it gave us the only hint we had as to the true state of things. In short, the whole tendency of discovery here, so far as it has gone, is much the same as we have seen it to be in Greece. Unless, therefore, it should suddenly take a new and unexpected direction, the probabilities are that as in the other case, so in it will be found that the truth has been the exclusive possession of no one school. The adherents of tradition will probably have to admit the heterogeneous and composite character of the Scriptural books, and will not finally be able to maintain the early authorship of the Pentateuch as a whole, or the absence of later interpolations in other books. The critics, on the other hand, will probably have a good deal to retract of what they have written about the untrustworthy character of many books. On the whole, the reliable character of the fundamental lines of Israel's history, as they are given in Scripture, will be confirmed, and the part taken by Moses in the establishment of the polity and religion of Israel will be found to be, not nearly so extensive, perhaps, as tradition would make it, but so intense and decisive that the whole later development was fixed by his action. Those who came after will be seen, most probably, to have only filled up the mould he fashioned. If so, the accuracy of the older view will in sub-

stance be vindicated. If ultimately that should prove to be the case, the Church will have less to revise in her teachings than may have been feared, and the advantage of giving free course to enquiry will once more have been triumphantly manifested. But in any case it must be clear that no greater service to Biblical science could be rendered than to promote new excavations in Biblical lands, and to complete those already begun. Scholarship has all but exhausted the materials at its disposal, and finality seems far off. The spade alone can give us new materials, and we must look to the managers of the Palestine and Egyptian Exploration Funds as our court of final appeal. It is to be hoped that the friends of the Bible will see this, and that these Funds will be supported with sufficient liberality to enable the great work to be carried on, and, if that be possible, completed.

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