

THE “HIGHER CRITICISM  
AND THE  
VERDICT OF THE MONUMENTS.

374  
78

Ä

# THE "HIGHER CRITICISM"

AND THE

## VERDICT OF THE MONUMENTS.

BY THE

REV. A. H. SAYCE,

QUEEN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD.

Second Edition.

XXII-10277

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE TRACT COMMITTEE.

LONDON:

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,

NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, W.C.; 43, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, E.C.

BRIGHTON: 135, NORTH STREET.

NEW YORK: E. & J. B. YOUNG & CO.

1894.

Ä

RICHARD CLAY & SONS, LIMITED  
LONDON & BUNGAY.

## PREFACE.

---

I AM well aware that the pages which follow will satisfy neither the "higher critics" nor their extreme opponents, and that every effort will be made to dispute or minimise the archæological evidence which they contain. But the great body of the religious public happily consists neither of "higher critics" nor of uncompromising "apologists," and is honestly desirous of knowing what is the actual testimony which the marvellous discoveries of oriental archæology are giving to the antiquity and historical character of the Old Testament. I have therefore endeavoured as it were to take stock of them, and to indicate the conclusions to which they point. I have aimed at writing as an archæologist rather than as a theologian, treating the books of the Hebrew Bible as I should any other oriental literature which laid claim to a similar antiquity, and following the archæological evidence whithersoever it may lead. Whether I have been successful in thus putting aside all those prepossessions in favour of a peculiarly divine origin which an Anglican priest might be expected to feel for the Scriptures of his Church is for my readers to decide.

That the evidence is imperfect the archæologist will be the first to admit. But so too is the evidence

of Geology and other branches of science, not to speak of history in the ordinary sense of the word. To this imperfection of the record must be ascribed the frequent cases in which we are obliged to use terms like "probable" and "it seems," and to suggest an inference instead of proving it mathematically. No doubt future research will diminish the number of such cases; nevertheless there must always remain instances in which the amount of certainty really attainable in historical investigations as in common life can never be arrived at. We must be content with probability only. Still probability is better than the bare possibility which the critic so often extracts from his inner consciousness.

A typical example of the "critical" method has just been brought under my observation. Dr. Chaplin has in his possession a small hæmatite weight found on the site of Samaria and inscribed with letters of the eighth century B.C. (see p. 449). The letters are very clear, though one of the two lines of which they consist is somewhat worn. Dr. Neubauer and myself found that one of the words occurring in them is *sh(e)l* "of." The "critics," however, had determined that this was a word of late date, and had used it as an argument for denying the early date of the Song of Songs. Consequently it became necessary to get rid of the archæological evidence which had so inconveniently turned up. First of all the genuineness of the inscription was denied, and when this argument failed it was asserted that the reading given by Dr. Neubauer and myself was false. The assertion was