

ASSYRIOLOGY: ITS USE AND ABUSE IN OLD TESTAMENT STUDY

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Assyriology: Its Use and Abuse in Old Testament Study by Francis Brown

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FRANCIS BROWN

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TESTAMENT STUDY**

ASSYRIOLOGY

*ITS USE AND ABUSE IN OLD TESTAMENT
STUDY*

BY

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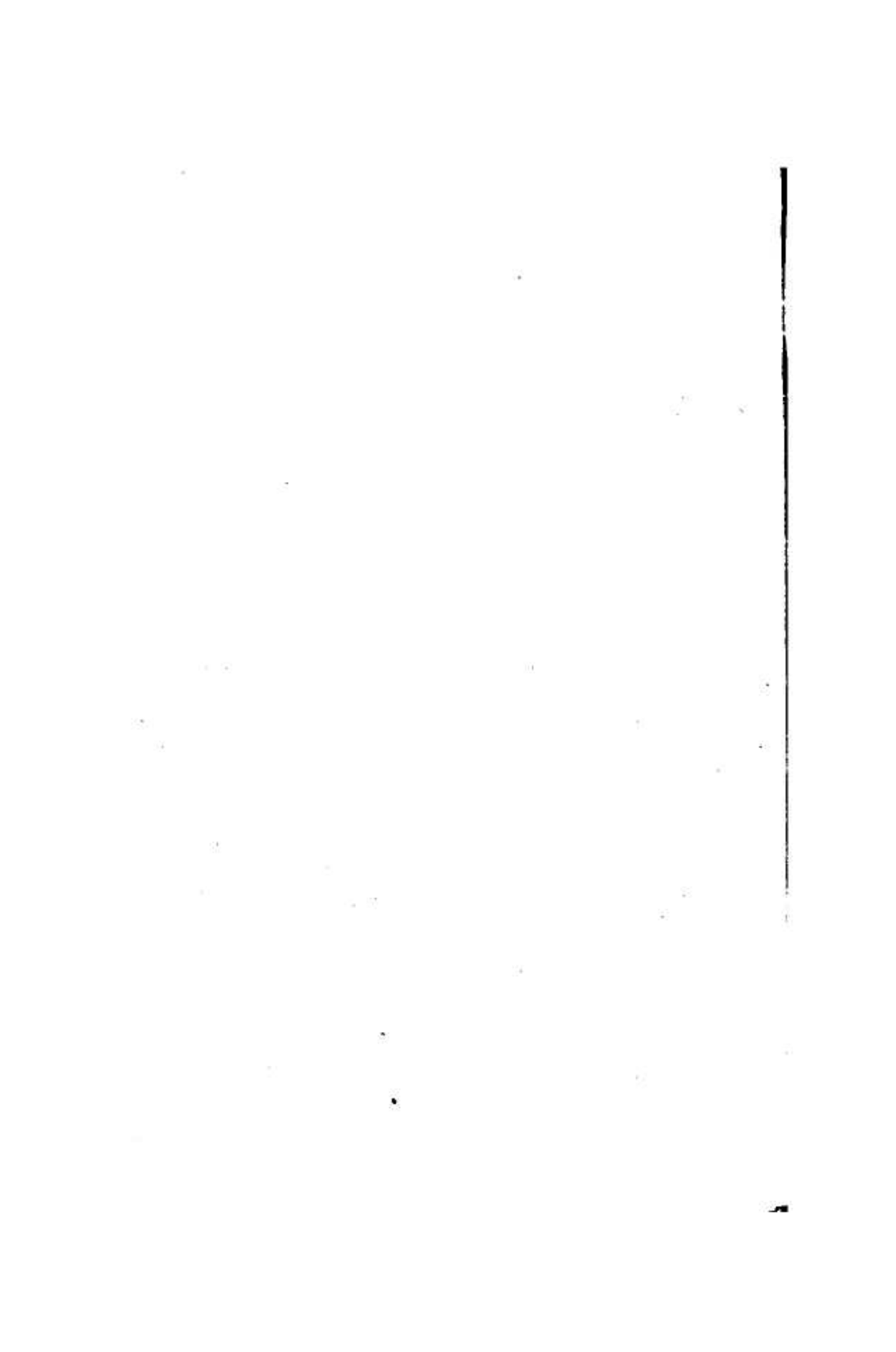
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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

It is the custom, in the Union Theological Seminary, to have each year of study opened with a public discourse from one of its Faculty. The following pages contain an address, given pursuant to this custom, September 18, 1884, in the Adams Chapel, Lenox Hill. In its printed form the illustrations are somewhat more copious than they could be in its oral delivery, a few verbal alterations have been made, frequent references added, and a bibliography appended. It is issued, without other change, as a slight contribution to the literature of a momentous subject.

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
NEW YORK CITY, March 31, 1885.



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MR. PRESIDENT,

Brethren, and Friends of the Seminary:

You will understand the hesitation with which, at our first public meeting in this new home of the Seminary, when our circumstances and surroundings all point toward the future, and the most fitting word would seem to be one that should be born of the occasion, and express its significance, I venture to lead your thoughts backward to an ancient and long-buried civilization, remote from our own, not only in time and locality, not only in re-

relationships of blood and language, but in almost all its conscious interests and aims. It would be wholly out of place to do so, if we were not Bible students, and if, in the surprising revolutions of history, it were not given to this forgotten people to come once more to the front, throwing light on old problems and opening fresh avenues to discovery for the Old Testament scholar.

The product of each new source of knowledge is apprehended only by slow degrees. A long time is needed to exhaust it. Patient thought is needed to set it in its right relations with the stock of truth already on hand. Scientific advance is through guesses—more or less rash—destined often to ephemeral life, and marking only the approximations of the mind to sound and accurate learning. No department of science can make real progress without constant and searching criticism,

that zeal may not outrun knowledge, nor brilliant conjecture do duty as secure fact.

But when the matter of research is closely related to our sacred documents, where truth is most needful, and mistake most disastrous, then such criticism, both calm and intrepid, is demanded with especial emphasis. And it is from this standpoint that it ought to be profitable to survey the great subject of ASSYRIAN DISCOVERY. The remarks just made are fully applicable here. Assyriology has its guesses, and it has its accurate knowledge. It has felt the benefit of rigid critical examination at some points, and has suffered, at others, for lack of it. In some directions it has borne rich fruit for the Old Testament exegete, but has been allowed to do harm in others. I trust, therefore, that it may not be thought foreign to those great matters which are to occupy us through the coming months, if we con-