

pulpit to present in popular form the new ideas which scholars have brought out concerning this book. This duty has already been done in a very satisfactory manner by several Unitarian ministers,* who have put the result of their studies in the shape of permanent contributions to the literature of the subject, and made it the easier for others to speak. With these aids it will be my fault if, in the series of discourses now undertaken, I fail to set before you a tolerably clear conception of the growth of the Hebrew literature according to the latest and best established view.

It must be owned a great deal of the study given to the Bible is given to little purpose because it does not go back of a current assumption as to the nature of the book and the manner and time in which it was written. These are fundamental questions, and yet in the circles where the Bible is most read they are never raised. Just what notion the ordinary reader has of the mode in which the world became possessed of the Bible, he might not find it easy himself to say, but he has always regarded it as "the word of God," and he supposes that it, in some way, came down from God out of heaven. Pressed to the point, he will admit that it must have been written by the hands of men, but these men were so under the control of the Holy Spirit that they wrote only what was dictated to them. The Holy Spirit was in the habit in those days of taking ignorant men and communicating through them

* Notably, Rev. John W. Chadwick and Rev. J. T. Sunderland. Of Mr. Chadwick's book, "The Bible of To-Day," I have made a free use.