

political strength and religious stability. The destruction of the Northern Kingdom, in 722 B.C., turns the main current of political and religious history into the Davidic kingdom of Judah. The Assyrians had now begun to play an important part in the life of the Hebrews, and from that time onward this remarkable race has been in contact with the great powers of the world. The Exile in Babylon at the beginning of the sixth century destroyed, for the time being, the political existence of the nation and prepared the way for the birth of the Jewish Church. After the Exile, under the Persian control, the small community was left free to devote its energies to religious and ecclesiastical questions. The Greek period, after Alexander's victory, brings with it dangers to the political and religious life of Judaism. When these reach their height, in the fanatical persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Maccabean revolt shows that the old warlike spirit is not dead, and that the religion through centuries of strife has attained an independent and vigorous character. Out of external conflict and internal division there arose the religious and political parties as we find them in NT times.

Each of these periods had produced its memorials or left its deposits, which have to some extent been preserved in the varied literature that we call the OT, and these are our chief sources for the study of Hebrew religion. In early songs and stories, in short, simple codes of laws, this life and religion finds its first expression. Then come early attempts at regular national chronicles. The first written sermons show that there is real literary culture, if of a simple kind. Later the laws are set in a more elaborate codification, and history is written from a definite religious point of view. Finally the whole is placed in the framework of the world's history, and a sacred book comes into existence which has nourished simple piety and produced hard dogma of religion and science. In other articles the political history will be treated at length and "the Bible as literature" discussed; here it is sufficient to say that no real history of the religion could be written until literary criticism had solved many problems, showing, e.g., that the Pentateuch consists of documents that can now be related to widely sepa-