

many centuries of struggle before a man of the highest intelligence could boldly declare that "an idol is nothing in the world" (1 Cor. 8/4), and even then such a man stood far above the popular view, and even he did not profess to dismiss in an easy fashion "the powers of darkness" (Eph. 6/12). Images were in use in the early days, when men did not distinguish as we do between symbol and reality (Gen. 31/35, 25/4, 1 S. 19/26). The image or sacred thing had something of Divine power or magic in it. Natural objects might be so regarded, and manufactured articles in a later period. Against the latter a religious conservatism might protest, as in this region there is a peculiar sensitiveness towards novelties and luxuries. The prohibition of "graven images" may not at first have included all symbols or objects of worship. The true religion does not come at first as an abstract creed, but works as a living principle from within, which only gradually discloses its full meaning and rejects that which is out of harmony with its essential nature.

*The Mosaic Period.*—With the modern view as to the date and composite character of the Pentateuch, we can no longer regard Abraham as the actual founder of Hebrew religion, though, as we have suggested, beliefs and customs of pre-historic times persisted, among the people, down to a late date. The narratives now grouped round the name of Moses belong to different periods and represent varied points of view. But the great body of OT scholars believe that the real history of the nation and its religion begins with the work of this great leader, who united several tribes and led them to the East Jordan region. If he was not the author of a complicated literature and elaborate legislation, he no doubt, according to the usage of those days, united in himself some of the simpler functions of priest and prophet as well as those of military ruler and guide. If we are prepared to treat the present tradition and the present text with any respect, this at least we must accept. It does not follow that he was conversant with Egyptian speculations and the complete development of Babylonian civic law. The earliest code that we can trace (Ex.