



AN IDOL.

§ 2. **Religion** has been, from the beginning, the most important and all-pervading element in the history of the human race. It is founded on the intellectual nature of man, who alone is able, through the contemplation of the world, its laws and harmonious order, to arrive at the knowledge of God as its Creator and Ruler, especially when assisted by the light of Divine Revelation.

The history of divinely revealed religion is divided into three great epochs: The **Patriarchal** religion, from the beginning of the human race to the appearance of Moses; the **Jewish** or **Mosaic** religion, from the time of Moses to the coming of **Christ**, the Son of God and the Redeemer of mankind; and the **Christian** religion, established by **Christ**.

Nations which fell away from the knowledge of the true God and adored nature or its forces, or idols, are called heathen. Among half-civilized communities higher types of heathen belief prevail, such as Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Shintoism, the leading religions of Asia. About one-half of the people of the world are heathen.

Questions. What has been the most important and all-pervading element in the history of the human race? What is religion founded on? Why? Into what three great epochs is the history of religion divided? Who are called heathen? What are the leading religions of Asia? Among what communities do they prevail? What proportion of the world's population is heathen?

§ 3. Before the advent of Jesus Christ the Old Testament was accepted as the sole Word of God. Its believers were called Jews, and their religion **Judaism**.

Jews do not believe in the divinity of Christ and the New Testament, and many of them look for the promised Savior as yet to come; the belief of most of them is the same as it was before Christ appeared.

Mohammedanism, founded by Mohammed, an Arab, in the seventh century, is a mixture of Christian, Jewish, and Pagan ideas.

In reckoning time, it is computed both from before and after the advent of Christ. Referring to a date later than his advent we say "Anno Domini" (A. D.), meaning "in the year of our Lord," and to one prior to it we say "before Christ" (B. C.). In ancient history dates are given as B. C.; thus, Rome was founded 753 B. C.

The Jewish chronology is based upon the Jewish understanding of the Old Testament account of the creation of the world, which they consider to have been 3,760 years and three months before the commencement of our era. By the Jewish system, the year 2000 of the Christians would be written 5761 "Anno Mundi" (in the year of the world).

The followers of the Greek Church, which is a form of Christianity, reckon from B. C. 5598, which they understand to be the date of creation, and with them the Christian year 2000 is written 7598 Anno Mundi.

Mohammedans reckon time from an era which corresponds to the year 622 Anno Domini. They would write the Christian year 2000 as the year 1378 of the "Hegira" (flight of Mohammed).

The earliest dates known to history are some 4,000 years old. Prior to that, mankind had not invented writing. All things pertaining to human life or the works of man, which existed before the beginning of history, are called **prehistoric**. For instance, the ancient mounds and cities of America, the lake-dwellings of Europe, some of the pottery of Egypt, and the remains of human beings found in various parts of the earth as fossils are prehistoric.

Questions. What was the important religion prior to the coming of Christ? What is the Jewish religion? How does their belief differ from that of Christians? What is the Mohammedan belief? Who founded this system? When? How do we reckon time?

§ 4. The interests of every society of human beings require that there shall be an authority in command which shall establish and enforce rules for the guidance and control of its members.

The ruling power is called the **sovereignty**, and may be a person, or a body of persons, or the entire people.

A **law** is a rule or command issued by the sovereignty to subjects to be obeyed under penalty.

The sovereignty and the laws of a nation constitute its **government**.

Questions. What do the interests of society require? What is the ruling power called? What may it be? What is a law? What constitutes the government of a nation?

§ 5. Government among savages is **tribal**, the chief being in full authority.

Among barbarous races **absolute monarchy** prevails. The monarch or ruler has unlimited control, the lives and property of his people being subject to his will or caprice. His sovereignty generally descends by inheritance.

Among civilized and enlightened nations the people themselves constitute more or less the sovereignty. Most of such nations have an hereditary monarch, but his power is shared by hereditary governing families called nobles, or by bodies of men chosen by the people, or by both. Such a government is called a **limited monarchy**.

In a **republican government** the sovereignty rests entirely with the people, who, at stated periods, choose or elect representatives to make and execute laws.

Questions. What is the government among savages? Who has full authority? What is the government among barbarians? What power has