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## BIBLICAL SOCIOLOGY. V.

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Our study thus far has been mainly analytical. We have outlined the institutions common to Israel and other ancient societies on the same level of culture. We have examined the domestic, the industrial, the political, and the religious phases of the situation under view. The remainder of the work will be synthetic. An attempt will be made to show how the distinctive religion of the Bible was produced by operation of the common forces that move society. In this respect the goal doubtless appears to be as far distant as when we set out on our journey. Our purpose is to explain the unique religion of Israel in terms of the social process. Thus far, however, instead of dealing with facts that are characteristic of the Bible and its religion, we have been at considerable pains to show in what ways the people of Israel were *not* peculiar. We have shown that their fundamental ideas and institutions were practically identical with those of other ancient societies. This fact has, indeed, been amply illustrated and emphasized by modern critical scholarship. Were it not for previous literary and historical criticism, our introductory analysis could not have been made, and the following synthesis would be impossible. The achievement of criticism thus far has been the laying bare of the fundamental terms of Israel's life. Further critical progress will exhibit the combination of these fundamental terms in the development of biblical religion.

In the following division of our work we shall consider the social process lying between two points: (1) the invasion of Canaan by the Israelite clans; (2) the annihilation of Israelite independence in the Babylonian exile. The period falling within these limits occupies more than half a millenium. It is the great *creative* epoch, in which the official religion of Israel ad-

vanced from polytheistic heathenism to ethical monotheism. This mighty spiritual revolution—fraught with incalculable consequence to the human race—was worked out through a number of reforms which were instituted upon various occasions. It is true that the reforms were followed by heathen reactions. But those reactions were due to persistence of primitive ideas and usages that formed the groundwork and starting-point of Israel's religion. The latest of the upward movements in the period in question was the great deuteronomic reformation which is connected with the name of King Josiah. Yet even this reform was followed by a lapse into paganism. Nevertheless, despite backslidings, the period in question was the great, creative epoch. The work of the post-exilic period was to *stereotype* the salient results of the *pre-exilic* history.

Our outstanding problem is to account for the peculiar consciousness of the divine which was acquired *by* Israel, and which the world has acquired *through* Israel. The experiences of this interesting Semitic people have set the standard for the faith and piety of countless millions, their spiritual posterity. Through Israel, our consciousness of the divine is what it is: God, the personal ground of the universe; eternally opposed to evil; eternally claiming our allegiance; eternally concerned in the redemption of the human race. This idea of God has been approached from different standpoints by various ethnic thinkers. But we acknowledge no direct religious inheritance from ethnic faiths outside of Israel. Great things may be said about the sages of the pagan world. We may laud Confucius, and Buddha, and Socrates, and Plato, and Marcus Aurelius, and many other men of the spirit. Nor may we fail to give due credit to these earnest souls, who wrought amid pagan darkness. But in the last analysis the religion of our modern world is fundamentally *biblical* religion, and no other. No matter how far afield our investigations may go, we must always return to the Bible and to the God of the Bible. Not the Yahweh of the earlier Old Testament "sources," but the distinctive God of our Holy Scriptures, is the polestar of the spiritual firmament. The Bible comes before us today with fresher and

more commanding interest than ever before, an imperious challenge to all our powers.

Our central task is discovery of the conditions under which the cult of Yahweh became fit to function as a universal religion. The solution of this problem will be found in terms of the differentiation of the Yahweh-idea. We find the thought of Yahweh as god of Sinai; as god of Israel; as "man of war"; as god of armies, or hosts, mighty in battle; as enemy of the Baals and other gods; as champion of the poor and oppressed; as upholder of justice and righteousness; as lord of lords and god of gods; and as maker of heaven and earth. If the sociological higher criticism be valid, the idea of Yahweh, in all its forms and phases, is answerable to positive situations in the *social process*. No smallest fraction of biblical theology can there be (neither Old Testament nor New) which is not correlated with social evolution. The holy and solemn phrases that have touched the imagination of countless millions of the spiritual descendants of Israel; the sacred institutions that have been handed down across the flight of ages; these impressive symbols are a deposit of that social process which it now becomes our task to reconstruct.

#### I. THE CONTACT OF ALIEN SOCIAL GROUPS

In ancient Semitic society the normal relation of alien social groups was that of hostility. This condition, however, was not peculiar to the Semites. It is common to all primitive society. The stranger is the enemy, the alien. This condition arises in dependence upon the uncertain food supply at the disposal of societies in a low state of culture. It persists far up into historical times, and has a powerful influence upon the formation of social aggregates. But in modern civilization, contrary to the ancient practice, we take it for granted that our own social group is at peace with other groups. Present international law assumes a *pax gentium* in the absence of express hostility. We are not here concerned with the forces that have produced this great reversal of attitude. We are emphasizing the *fact*. The modern usage has become so habitual that it is hard to project

the imagination downward into the earlier state of society in which the opposite assumption is made.

In ancient society, then, a strange man, or a strange people, was an enemy. Under such conditions, the prevailing code of morals had no place for the idea of human brotherhood. The obligations of morality were co-extensive only with the obligations imposed by kinship or by special treaty. Thus we find the following rule among the laws of Israel: "Ye shall not eat anything that dieth of itself. Thou mayest give it unto the sojourner that is within thy gates, that he may eat it. Or thou mayest *sell* it unto a foreigner" (Deut. 14:21). This furnishes an excellent illustration of the feeling of group solidarity, and of disregard for outside interests, which prevailed in ancient society and which is found in all backward races. The Israelite might not partake of tainted meat. But he might give it as a present to the "sojourner" with whom he was in covenant. Or he might dispose of it, as an article of merchandise, to the "foreigner," who had no moral claims upon him. Such distinctions exhibit a very interesting gradation of morality. Conformably to this feeling a state of hostility existed between alien groups, unless qualified by special treaty. And even these bars to hostility were broken down by the stress of the struggle for existence.

The antagonism thus normally prevailing between alien groups had an important correlative in the religious field. The ancient union of politics and religion was so intimate that the hostility of alien groups drew along with it the hostility of the respective gods. The gods were conceived as powerful members of the social circle (cf. *Religious Institutions, supra*); and since the gods were thought of as parts of society, it is clear that they were drawn irresistibly into the struggle interests of society. We therefore find in ancient and primitive thought the idea of *the wars of the gods*. This was not a matter of symbolism or figure; it was a literal belief of the human mind at one stage in its history. The belligerency of the divine partners of mankind is thus a prominent feature of ancient mythology. This aspect of early religious thought is plainly

connected with the original union of church and state in society. The wars of the gods reflect the hostility of alien social groups. The men and gods of hostile groups were involved in a reciprocity of hatred. A good illustration is found in the boy Hannibal, of Carthage, who, standing before the altar of his ancestral gods, vowed eternal hatred for the people and gods of Rome. Another good example is found in the famous inscription of King Mesha, on the Moabite Stone: "I am Mesha, King of Moab. . . . And I made this high place [altar] for Chemosh. . . . And Chemosh said unto me, Go, take Nebo against Israel. . . . And I took it, and slew the whole of it, 7,000 men and male strangers." The implication of the god Chemosh in the hostility between Israel and Moab is clearly shown here. Another good illustration is found in the story of the fight between David and Goliath. Concerning Goliath, we read: "And the Philistine cursed David by his gods." On the other hand, David says: "I come to thee in the name of Yahweh of hosts, the god of the armies of Israel." (I Sam. 17:43 f.).

We now turn from these concrete facts to the following summary, which is worthy of special emphasis and careful study:

*In ancient society the normal relation of alien groups is that of hostility, unless modified by special treaty; and this antagonism is conceived as involving the gods of the respective groups.*

In accordance with this principle, the earliest and crudest idea of Yahweh in ancient Israel was that of a warrior. Thus it was declared with naïve bluntness, "Yahweh is a man of war" (Exod. 15:3). In this character, he was frequently called a god of hosts, or armies, mighty in battle. In harmony with this, the battles of Israel were spoken of as "the battles of Yahweh" (I Sam. 25:28). The enemies of Israel were, therefore, "the enemies of Yahweh" (I Sam. 30:26). It was from this point of view—so commonplace to the ancient mind, but so strange to the modern mind—that the famous *Book of the Wars of Yahweh* was written (Num. 21:14). From the standpoint of the union of church and state, this ancient composition was

really a book of the wars of Israel. It was a martial history of the people of Yahweh, and was one of the important "sources" upon which biblical historiographers depended for material in preparing the Old Testament.

We are now ready to see that the earliest use which the Israelites had for their new god was in connection with the forcible seizure of their future home. It is a plain fact of history that these desert clans graduated from nomadism to the settled life by invading the land of Canaan. They had entered into covenant at Mount Sinai with this god of the desert; and they expected his help in dispossessing the various communities which held the coveted territory. The attitude of the Israelite groups toward the Canaanite groups was therefore *hostile*. It was proposed to exterminate in cold blood the earlier population. As a consequence, the god of Israel was inevitably regarded as hostile to the Canaanites and their gods, the Baalim.

Bearing these facts in mind, we move into another stage of this interesting line of thought. In ancient Semitic warfare a common practice was to denounce against the enemy the "sacred ban." In the Hebrew language this was called the *herem*, חֵרֵם. This brings to view an institution common to the ancient Semites, as well as other primitive peoples. The *herem* discloses the religious phase of the hostility between alien social groups. It was proclaimed by the responsible authority of a group, in the name of the god of the group. In its extreme form it called for the utter destruction of the opposed group together with its movable property. When the *herem* was thus put into effect, the entire vanquished group was regarded as a sacrifice to the god of the victors. A striking instance is furnished by the Moabite Stone, already quoted. Here we find the sacred ban denounced by King Mesha, in the name of the Moabite god Chemosh. It called for the utter destruction of an Israelite community at Nebo. The theory of sacrifice connected with the *herem* was not peculiar to this institution, but was identical with the common idea of sacrifice. When the members of a defeated group were slain, their shades were supposed to become slave attendants to the victorious god. We may define

the *herem* as a religious institution, coming within the scope of the sacrificial idea, and expressing the relation of absolute hostility between alien social groups. If it appear strange to cite hostility as a true social relation, it should be pointed out that society includes more than amity and co-operation; it also provides a field for conflict and hostility. The process of social development has been set forward not only by co-operation but by antagonism; not only by peace but by war; not only by amity but by enmity. Wholly aside from the question of the relative merits of peace and war, the complex fabric of civilization owes as much to the struggle interests as to the peaceful interests.

Since the sacred ban was a common Semitic institution, it is not surprising to read in the Hexateuch that it was proclaimed against the Canaanites in the name of Yahweh. We do not, at this moment, ask whether the Hexateuch is literally correct in all that it says about the *herem*. We merely ask what is actually said. One of the most characteristic passages reads as follows: "When Yahweh thy god shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and shall cast out many nations before thee . . . thou shalt smite them. . . . Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them. . . . Ye shall break down their altars, and . . . burn their graven images with fire. . . . And thou shalt consume all the peoples that Yahweh thy god shall deliver unto thee. Thine eye shall not pity them. Neither shalt thou serve their gods" (Deut. 7:1, 2, 5, 16). Again we read: "Of the cities of these peoples that Yahweh thy god giveth thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth; but thou shalt utterly destroy them" (Deut. 20:16 f.). According to the book of Joshua, the sacred ban was rigorously observed; for we read: "So Joshua smote all the land. . . . He left none remaining, and he utterly destroyed all that breathed" (Josh. 10:40). Throughout these passages the verbs translated "utterly destroy," "utterly devote," etc., are forms of the Semitic root which gives the noun *herem*.

In the Hexateuch this important term frequently occurs. Its content is unmistakable. Although it strongly resembles the *herem* indicated by the Moabite Stone, which is characteristic of

the whole Semitic area, yet the sacred ban of the Hexateuch differs in one very important respect from the common usage. The *herem* of the Moabite Stone is a conventionality of Semitic society. But the sacred ban of the Hexateuch is more than a conventionality. It departs from the common Semitic practice, inasmuch as it is proclaimed for an extraordinary purpose. The hexateuchal *herem* is viewed as the command of the one true God, who orders the destruction of the Canaanites and their immoral, polytheistic religion in the interests of ethical monotheism. This is a commonplace about which there can be no difference of opinion. There is no dispute about the meaning of the term *herem* as found in the Hexateuch. All schools, conservative and radical, agree that the writers who gave us the Old Testament in its present form contemplated the sacred ban from the higher standpoint here emphasized.

But if the Hexateuch is literally correct at this point, neither the prophets nor the priests occupy the creative position assigned them by critical scholarship in the history of Israel's religion. If the sacred ban had its hexateuchal meaning at the time of the invasion of Canaan, there was no original work for the prophets or the priests to do. In brief, if the *herem* of the Hexateuch was an item in a supernatural divine campaign against immoral polytheism in the interests of ethical monotheism, then the higher criticism falls to the ground. The distinctive message of Israel to the world was virtually delivered before the national history began. The national programme was cut out in advance, like the work of a packed convention. The entire problem of the biblical religion may be temporarily considered as turning about this point. It is not that other items may not be placed at the center of the discussion in their proper order. But from our present standpoint, the *herem* is a factor of cardinal importance in the treatment of the biblical problem.

The question here is, did the sacred ban have its higher meaning at the time of the Israelite invasion of Canaan? To this inquiry traditional scholarship can have but one answer. It can reply only in the affirmative. It can say only that the sacred ban is an expression of the true God's anger with paganism. On

the other hand, the premises of critical scholarship lead to a negative answer, whether the critics agree on their treatment of the problem or not. Our immediate object is to show that this question can be so handled as to bring the critical view of the Bible into clearer light, and to give it a firmer basis in facts to which all schools appeal.

Although the higher criticism sets aside the Hexateuch in its *present form*, there can be no denial that the sacred ban was a very important and dramatic factor in Israel's experience at the time of the invasion. There can be no difference of opinion over the proposition that a sacred ban of *some* kind was denounced against the Canaanites, and their gods the Baalim, at this time. In view of the general situation, it would have been extremely strange if a ban had *not* been put in force as these desert nomads approached the coveted territory. From the standpoint of ancient society and its religion, the *herem* was a logical incident of the Israelite attack upon the Canaanites. But since the sacred ban did not issue from special miraculous revelation among other Semitic peoples, the opposite proposition is merely an unverified assumption in the case of ancient Israel. In other words, the burden of proof rests more heavily upon the anti-critical school than upon the critics. For traditionalism, in defending the integrity of the hexateuchal ban, is arguing on behalf of an absolutely unparalleled proposition. The biblical documents in which the ban is treated with the greatest fulness are precisely the ones which were prepared by writers who were not contemporary with the events described, and who worked in sight of the ideals and completed achievements of the later ages of Israel's history (cf. *supra*, *Nature of the Biblical Material*). But although we reject the traditions in the form in which they now stand, we clearly have a right to assume that they strike their roots into the soil of primitive social usage, and that they rest back upon conventionalities of the Semites. For it cannot be too forcefully emphasized that the sacred ban of the Hexateuch (aside from its moral and spiritual aspects) is not in any way peculiar to Israel. Objectively viewed, the ban of the Moabites in the name of Chemosh, and the ban of the Israelites

in the name of Yahweh, were identical. So that it is not unreasonable to reduce the hexateuchal ban to the level of a primitive conventionality. To this extent, then, the tradition has a good historical basis.

We therefore find that the doctrine of the hostility of Yahweh against the Baals of the Canaanites got its crude beginnings in the hostility normally existing between alien social groups. So far as the mere, naked fact of Yahweh's antagonism against the gods of Canaan is concerned, it has no mysterious origin. Aside from its moral and spiritual contents (here taken as a later importation), it represents the common practice of the time. Our synthetic treatment begins with this minimum proposition about the sacred ban.

But before the general argument is carried farther, some very important supplementary observations are in order. It should be understood that we are putting forward the sacred ban only as one factor in the biblical situation. The idea of God, as found in the Bible, is inseparably associated with opposition and protest. The Bible is not a theological treatise, designed to give an abstract idea of God and his attributes and purposes. It is a moving picture, with a dramatic motive running through it. A large element in the drama is the disastrous overthrow of the heathen divinities. Yahweh appears as an opponent of "other gods." Our first business is to discover, if possible, the basis of his opposition. Our thesis here is that the tradition of his hostility was established, in the first instance, by the contact of alien social groups. It is true that if the Old Testament be taken as a whole, Yahweh appears as the foe of *all* gods other than himself. But in the earlier historical documents, and in the prophetic writings, he appears more often opposed to Baal and to the Baalim than to any other divinities. Now, these divinities were the gods of the social groups which the Israelites attempted to dislodge at the time of the invasion. Consequently, it was the Baalim, rather than other gods in general throughout the ancient world, that acted as the original and constant foil for development of the Yahweh opposition. It was the Baalim, and

all the machinery of their cultus, that were put solemnly under the sacred ban as the Israelites approached the land of Canaan.

It is easy to prove the truth of this statement by going rapidly over the historical material relating to the period between the invasion and the Babylonian exile. We find this material in the Judges-Samuel-Kings narrative, and in the literary prophets. Thus, in Judg. 2:11 we read: "And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, and served the Baalim."<sup>1</sup> This charge is repeated in 3:7 and by implication in many other places in the same book. In 6:25 f. we find Gideon throwing down the "altar of the Baal." There is no reason to regard this account as an interpolation by an editor who is working in view of later standards. Again we read: "As soon as Gideon was dead, Israel turned again and played the harlot after the Baalim" (8:33). Further: "And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of Yahweh, and served the Baalim" (10:6). It is true that in this and other passages the

<sup>1</sup> Although *some* of the Israelites may have been involved in Baal worship from a period very soon after the conquest, *all* of them did not bow the knee to Baal, or the Old Testament could hardly have been written. There were enough who did not worship the Baalim to furnish a nucleus for the strong reaction against Baalism at a later time under the prophets. The Book of Judges in its present shape comes from the hand of a late theological pragmatist, who makes very sweeping statements about Israel's worship of the Baalim. These gods were the deities of a settled agricultural population; and they were believed to preside over the increase of the earth (Hos. 2:8). When the Israelites learned agriculture, they naturally became involved in Baalism. How far this went we cannot say. But it is clear that the passage from nomadism, or semi-nomadism, to agriculture was neither prompt nor complete. (See Kautsch, "Religion of Israel," in Hastings' *Dict. of Bible*, extra vol., p. 645). As Marti observes, "the fertile *lowlands* proved to be inhabited by mighty spirits in far greater numbers than the barren *uplands* where the nomads dwelt in tents" (*Religion of the O. T.* [London, 1907], p. 91; italics ours). All that we shall seek to emphasize in the present paper is the objective basis for hostility between Yahweh and the Baalim during and after the conquest. The primary ground of this hostility was the contact of *alien social groups* (i.e., Israelites and Canaanites). We shall try to show in future papers that these rival gods were necessarily allowed to stand while the two peoples were being organized into a *single social group* (i.e., the monarchy); and that the traditional hostility between the gods finally gave expression to conflicting interests within the framework of the monarchy itself.

Israelites are also said to worship the gods of Syria, Sidon, Moab, Ammon, Philistia, etc. (cf. I Kings 11:7; 14:9). But it is the local Baalim of Canaan that most often head the list of iniquitous worships, and most often appear as the chief cause of offense. It was these local gods that acted as the original foil for the display of Yahweh's hostility. They are mentioned again in the narratives concerning the times of Samuel, in which the people are exhorted to put away the Baalim (I Sam. 7:4; 12:10).

The fact of Baal-worship, and the vitality of the terrible *herem*, denounced against it in the name of Yahweh, are nowhere more clearly illustrated than in the history of King Ahab and the prophet Elijah. This monarch married the daughter of the king of Sidon, "and went and served Baal. . . . And he reared an altar for Baal in the house of Baal" (I Kings 16:31, 32). In this case the god in question was imported into Israel together with the princess who became Ahab's wife. But the situation raised the whole question of the local gods: For when Elijah meets Ahab he utters the indictment: "Thou hast followed the Baalim" (I Kings 18:18). When the usurper Jehu, acting under inspiration of the Yahweh prophets, destroyed the house of Ahab, a large part of his ferocity was expended against the worship of the foreign Baal. Many of the prophets, priests, and worshipers of the god were destroyed with the edge of the sword, and his temple in Samaria was desecrated. At the conclusion of a strenuous account of these events, we are told, "Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel" (II Kings 10:28). The foremost supporter of Jehu in this wholesale slaughter was a certain Jehonadab, the son of Rechab (II Kings 10:23). We learn elsewhere that the Rechabites were exponents of the simple life, whose ancestry went back to the Kenites of the Arabian desert (Jer., chap. 35; I Chron. 2:55). Jehu knew that the presence of one of these wilderness followers of Yahweh would be a visible guarantee of his own good faith in destroying the worshipers of Baal. Corresponding events took place in Judah, the southern kingdom. The temple of Baal in Jerusalem was demolished; the priest of Baal was killed; and the reigning queen, who was a Baal-adher-

ent, was assassinated (II Kings, chap. 11). All this was quite in the spirit of the *herem* which was proclaimed at the time of the invasion. We are not here concerned to inquire into the reason for continued vitality of the sacred ban in the face of the popularity of Baal-worship. What calls for emphasis at this point is the outstanding fact that Yahweh and the Baalim actually continued to be in opposition, forming the poles of an antithesis.

Although the foreign Baal was "destroyed out of Israel" by the violent measures just indicated, the local Canaanite gods were still worshiped. "Thou hast followed the Baalim," said Elijah. It is not necessary to the argument to put on exhibit at this point the reasons why the native divinities were far more difficult of eradication than the Baal imported from Sidon. The fact itself is brought out clearly enough by the prophet Hosea, who compares Israel going after the Baalim to his own adulterous wife consorting with numerous lovers. Hosea lived many years after the times of Elijah. In his day the idea was still entertained that Yahweh was primarily a god of armies and of the hills. And it was believed that the local Baalim, who had been worshiped in Canaan from time out of mind, were the gods who had special charge of the crops, who sent the rain, and blessed the fields in the fertile valleys. In spite of his mixed figures, the meaning of this prophet is unmistakable: "Contend with your mother . . . for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink. . . . For she did not know that I gave her the grain, and the new wine, and the oil, and multiplied unto her the silver and gold which they made into the image of Baal. . . . And I will visit upon her the days of the Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them . . . and went after her lovers" (Hos. 2:2, 5, 8, 13). "When Israel was a child then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. The more the prophets called them, the more . . . they sacrificed unto the Baalim. . . . But when he offended in Baal he died" (Hos. 11:1, 2; 13:1).

One of the distracting complications of the problem was that the people called Yahweh himself a Baal. This term, as already

explained, is generic, having the sense of owner, or proprietor. The Israelite invasion of Canaan did not set Yahweh over against Baal (generic, singular), but primarily against *the Baalim* (specific, plural). In the campaign against the Baalim, the application of this term to Yahweh became a source of increasing confusion and misunderstanding. Accordingly, we find the prophet Hosea laying down the following rule: "And it shall be, saith Yahweh, that thou . . . shalt no more call me *my Baal*, for I will take away the names of the Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name" (Hos. 2:16, 17). A similar line of thought is followed by the prophet Jeremiah, who has great affinity for his predecessor Hosea: "Their fathers forgot my name in (for) Baal" (Jer. 23:27). "Upon every high hill and under every green tree thou didst bow thyself, playing the harlot. . . . How canst thou say, I have not gone after the Baalim?" (2:20, 23). "They have walked after the stubbornness of their own heart, and after the Baalim" (9:14).

We are not here concerned with the question how the people could worship the Baalim innocently when at the same time the prophets claimed that this practice was wrong. This matter will be taken up in its due order. At present, we are merely emphasizing the opposition which was established between Yahweh and the Baals as a matter of *fact*. It is true that the extremists in the Yahweh party never succeeded in forcing acceptance of all their claims. The prophetic Yahwists, for instance, were incredible to most of their contemporaries. Even the beginner in biblical science can see that the prophets waged a tremendous fight, and that they were mostly without honor in their own country. But this is beside the present argument, which is merely introductory. We are not trying to elucidate the status of the anti-Baal party at this early point in the discussion. We are simply emphasizing that there *was* such a party, and that it was at the head and front of the Yahweh opposition to "other gods." The evidence just brought forward proves incontestably that the local divinities of Canaan represent the chief and original offense to the Yahweh party. This proposition stands un-

shaken, however much it may be shown that the Israelites worshiped still other gods imported from foreign lands.

Let it be repeated that we are trying to reproduce the situations under which the idea of Yahweh became fit to function at the center of a world-religion. *Ideas are, in some way, the rallying-points of social institutions.* They are not at first struck out upon the high level of abstraction. They are presented as elements of concrete situations involving the interplay of *persons*. Institutions are formed around leading persons who mediate the embodied ideas. The statement just emphasized may therefore be amended in the interests of sharper definition as follows: *Ideas become the rallying-points of institutions by taking the personal form.* The idea has to be identified with some leading individual before it can become effective in the social process. There is profound truth in the "great man" theory of history. Although the great man cannot arbitrarily "make" history; although he must obey the demands of the situation in which he finds himself; although he cannot divert the social process from its predetermined course; yet it is equally true that history cannot be made without great men. The world is always finding itself in impossible situations from which it can be extricated only by great men. History is a tremendous requisition for leaders and heroes by whom needs may be satisfied and ideals realized. Not imperialism in the abstract, but Caesarism; not the Reformation, but Lutheranism; not ethical monotheism, but *Yahwism*. The principle is the same whether the hero be human or divine—whether he be a great man or a god. Society has full use for both categories. Indeed, we have seen that originally the gods were counted as members of the social circle. They were treated as organic parts of the communities that worshiped them. And the truth cannot be too strongly emphasized that while the human race was in this "church-and-state" frame of mind, the idea of Yahweh gradually became the rallying-point for the distinctive institutions of Israel. The idea was interpreted by various leading men—prophets, priests, and kings. These men,

for the time being, were viewed as the personal representatives of the deity.

We are now prepared to close the first part of our synthetic treatment with an observation which throws light back over the ground already traversed: *A person becomes the rallying-point of an institution by representing the positive side of some struggle-interest that underlies the social process.* Life is everywhere shot through with antitheses. Neither man nor God is exempt from the necessity of making terms with antitheses if he would be a person worthy of respect. We do not think of God as an abstraction. We think of him as interested in the concrete issues of life. Our God is not the God of philosophy, nor even the God of systematic theology. He appeals to the imagination as the hero of a tremendous drama. The religion of the Bible comes to mankind out of an intensely dramatic situation. Its dramatic quality is recognized alike by the traditional theology and by the higher criticism. The difference between the two standpoints is in respect of the question, What makes the drama go forward? What were the forces moving behind the scenes in the history of Israel? Our answer is that the drama found its moving forces in the commonplace conditions of the social process. The fundamental antithesis running through the entire drama is: Yahweh against the Baalim. The sufficient explanation of this antagonism, in the *first* instance, is the contact of alien social groups. Its original basis was the terrible *herem* denounced against the Canaanites and their gods as the clans of Israel approached the coveted territory. At the outset, the terms of this antithesis were void of the content which they finally acquired. The Yahweh-Baal opposition, on the basis of conventional Semitic usage alone, became a salient feature of Israel's tradition. This opposition was taken up and treated from the standpoint of subsequent experience by various interpreters. The contrasted terms finally became vehicles for expression of conflicting interests whereof the nomads gathered before Sinai could never have dreamed. *The idea of Yahweh became the rallying-point of the distinctive institutions of Israel through its attachment to a series of antitheses representing real interests.*

## II. ISRAEL AND CANAAN

It ought to be perfectly clear by this time that the community which was the subject of the Judges-Samuel-Kings narrative was not of homogeneous origin. Its ancestry is to be traced backward through two main branches. One branch had its roots in the Israelite clans that settled in the hills of Judah, Ephraim, and Gilead. The other branch grew out of the Canaanite communities that held the remainder of the country. For a long time these branches were distinct. They were, of course, in *contact* from the first. They could not escape each other's influence. They logically formed a single community, whether that fact were expressed in a set constitution or not. For several generations there was a sharp contrast between them. This contrast is, of course, plainly in evidence in the book of Judges. It reappears in Samuel. It finally vanishes in Kings. As touching the settlement, the essential facts were canvassed in the preceding number. Holding those facts in view, we now undertake an inquiry into the relations between the contrasted groups, with special reference to the Yahweh-Baal antithesis.

When the clans of Israel pressed over the frontier of Canaan, they were doubtless impelled by the fierce hope of sweeping the whole country. The shock of the conflict was never forgotten. In their excited, oriental imagination, Yahweh, the man of war and god of armies, led them against the Canaanites and the Baalim. "And Yahweh was with Judah; and he drove out the inhabitants of the hill country. For he could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because they had chariots of iron" (Judg. 1:19). In view of the fact that the hill country alone was taken, and the fact that Yahweh himself was already identified with Mount Sinai, he gained the reputation of a *hill-god*. Thus, the Syrians at a later time declared: "Yahweh is a god of the hills; but he is not a god of the valleys" (I Kings 20:28). The conquests made by the Israelites in the hill country were enough to sustain the reputation of Yahweh as a god of war. But they were not enough to dispose of the Baalim as divine masters of the fertile valleys and plains. After the first flush of invasion was over, the two peoples, exhausted by conflict, fronted each other with deadly

hatred. The numerous Canaanite communities that remained were an obstruction to the victorious progress of the Israelites. On the other hand, the intruders limited the economic resources of the remaining Canaanites, and were a standing threat of hostility. Neither side knew what the other would do. There were mutual suspicion and fear.

Under these circumstances it is clear that there could be no speedy reconciliation of the rival gods. In the mind of Israel, the god Yahweh was opposed to the divinities of Canaan just as the Israelites themselves were opposed to the Canaanites. The two peoples and their gods were involved in a sharp reciprocity of hatred. The *herem* of Yahweh against the Baalim remained in full force, and became an outstanding feature of Israelitish tradition. Doubtless the Canaanites also denounced the sacred ban against the invaders and their god; but since the Bible is a collection of controversial documents representing only one side of an issue, the original inhabitants have no opportunity of stating their case to us.

After the invaders had unsuccessfully tried the method of absolute hostility against the older inhabitants, the latter gathered themselves together and attempted the same procedure with reference to the invaders—and with a like result. In other words, after the Israelite groups had tried to exterminate the Canaanite groups, and had failed, the Canaanites tried to exterminate the Israelites, and also failed in their turn. We have taken up these facts in a preliminary way in considering the great battle upon the Plain of Esdraelon, described in Judg., chaps. 4 and 5 (cf. previous instalment). The defeat of the Canaanites under Sisera, at the hands of the Israelite militia gathered by Deborah and Barak, marked the failure of the attempt to expel the intruders. We now ask what was the effect of this particular conflict upon the religious aspect of the situation. This is best answered with reference to a passage in the Song of Deborah. It happened that when the life-and-death struggle was going forward upon the Plain of Esdraelon, an Israelite clan which inhabited a village named Meroz refused to aid their brethren. The circumstance is interestingly treated by the Deborah Song as follows:

Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of Yahweh.  
 Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof,  
 Because they came not to the help of Yahweh—  
 To the help of Yahweh against the mighty (Judg. 5:23).

It is deeply significant that this old poem, in harmony with the whole trend of primitive thought, should formulate the case in religious terms. For this was one of the "battles of Yahweh"; and if any Israelite clan failed to take part, it thereby refused to come to the help of Yahweh against the Baalim and their Canaanite worshippers. Thus we see how the battle of Esdraelon *re-emphasized* the opposition between the gods. The alien social groups had again come together in the shock of deadly conflict. All their emotions had been profoundly stirred. The religious effect of the battle was far-reaching. It established the traditions of Israel even more firmly than hitherto in the idea of the hostility of Yahweh against the Baalim.

It is clear that Esdraelon left the two parties in relatively the same position as before. The victory of the Israelites over their enemies did not advance the territorial acquisitions of Israel. It simply put a check upon the Canaanites. The combatants remained fronting each other in hatred as hitherto. The attempt of the Canaanites to dislodge the newcomers had the effect of increasing the hostility generated by the earlier attempt of the Israelites to sweep away the Canaanites. Esdraelon solved no problem. It settled no question at issue. The entire community was left in a state of uncertainty and confusion. The issue between Israel and Canaan was an open one. And in view of the union of politics and religion, the issue between Yahweh and the Baalim was therefore an open one. Thus it is clear that there was an impressive tradition of religious hostility written large against the background of the early history. This tradition became part and parcel of the entire historical outlook. It was a conventional fact that even a child could understand. It was related by the fathers to the children, just as the elders have always told the rising generations about great events in the past:

Our fathers have told us  
 What work thou didst in their days—

In the days of old.  
Thou didst drive out the nations with thy hand;  
But them thou didst plant.  
Thou didst afflict the peoples;  
But them thou didst spread abroad.  
For they gat not the land in possession by their  
own sword.  
Neither did their own arm save them.  
But thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light  
of thy countenance,  
Because thou wast favorable unto them (Ps. 44).

This late psalm is to be read in connection with those passages in Joshua which contemplate the conquest as having been much more sweeping than it actually was. Many similar passages are to be found (cf. Amos 2:9). They all show that the tradition of a breach, or opposition, between Israel and Canaan persisted in the historical consciousness. The same facts that account for the vitality of this idea are also connected with the idea of antagonism between Yahweh and the Baalim.

But an objection may be brought forward at this point which apparently obstructs the progress of the argument. In dealing with it, however, we shall find ourselves advanced another important step in consideration of the subject as a whole. It may be pointed out that after the battle of Esdraelon there was a gradual conjugation of the alien social groups through treaty and intermarriage, the two peoples finally merging into a single nation under the monarchy. This fact may be used with apparent force against our immediate thesis. It may be urged, *ad hominem*, that reasoning upon our own premises, the establishment of civil peace would necessarily bring peace between Yahweh and the Baalim; and that since there was long-extended religious hostility after the institution of the monarchy, this religious hostility could not have had a social basis. The reply to this is, that the case is not so simple as it seems. If the situation had not been so complicated, the establishment of the monarchy must indeed have issued in permanent religious peace within the community. As a matter of fact, under the monarchy, the public officials and the mass of the people acted as if there were no

longer a basis for opposition between Yahweh and the Baalim. For while Yahweh was worshiped by everybody as the *national* god, the Baalim also had some kind of recognition as *local* gods, and the teraphim were everywhere treated as *family* gods. These facts have been emphasized already in connection with our study of the early religious institutions; and they are to be used later in the discussion. At present, we simply refer to the facts, and admit that from a superficial standpoint the objection has force. From a deeper standpoint, however, the objection has no weight. This will become evident as we proceed.

As already observed, the conflict in the plain of Esdraelon left the combatants in possession of the same territories as before. It also failed to dispose of the issue between Israel and Canaan. The subsequent history of the land made it impossible for later generations to continue the feud. The fighting generations passed away on both sides. Their descendants were forced to abandon the war, and recognize each other. So that the issue never had any *formal* settlement. When the two peoples at last merged into a single community under the kings, the descendants of the Canaanites took the name of Israel, and lost their identity. For various reasons, which will be set forward in due time, this composite society forgot its Canaanite ancestry, and emphasized its Israelite descent. As a result, later generations cherished the idea that their ancestors had entered the country, and completely swept away the alien Canaanites. This false assumption led to much misunderstanding.

The time intervening between the battle of Esdraelon and the establishment of the monarchy under David was a period of much confusion. No general adjustment of any kind, either civil or religious, was possible. The reason for this is to be found in the salient fact that there were no national, or general, authorities on *either* side. The Canaanite communities throughout the land were each disposed in connection with a walled city. They constituted "city-states." But they had no generalized social machinery. So far as we know, there had never been a national government established in the land. The Tel-el-Amarna tablets prove that the community was a group of jealous principalities

just prior to the Israelite invasion. And in complete harmony therewith is the narrative in the first of Judges, which proves that there was no national resistance against the Israelites when they entered the land. Later on, at the time of Esdraelon, the Canaanites merely formed a coalition against the Israelites, as the Song of Deborah shows: "The *kings* came and fought; then fought the *kings* of Canaan" (Judg. 5:19).<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, it has been shown that the hexateuchal theory of a united Israel, invading the country under a single commander, is the exact opposite of the truth. Each clan fought for its own territory, as the first of Judges proves. And later on, at the time of Esdraelon, the leaders Deborah and Barak found it impossible to get recruits from *all* the Israelite clans. The host of ten thousand peasants that fought under Barak at Esdraelon against the Canaanites was merely a coalition, like the army of Sisera. And the fact that only a part of the clans answered the call to battle, shows that the Israelites were also lacking in unity of spirit. We have shown previously that the Israelite clan living in the village of Meroz refused to co-operate against the Canaanites at this time. A further quotation from the Song of Deborah throws more light on the point:

By the watercourses of Reuben  
There were great resolves of heart.  
Why satest thou among the sheepfolds?  
To hear the pipings for the flocks?  
At the watercourses of Reuben  
There were great searchings of heart.  
Gilead abode beyond the Jordan.  
And Dan, why did he remain in ships?  
Asher sat still at the shore of the sea,  
And abode by his creeks (Judg. 5:15-17).

Another important testimony regarding the lack of national organization among the Israelites is the reiterated statement found in Judges: "In those days there was no king in Israel. Every

<sup>2</sup> The reference to Jabin, king of Canaan, in Judg. 4:2, 23, 24, is unhistorical. It is not only contrary to the passage quoted above, which refers to the *kings* of Canaan; but it is contradicted by everything that we learn about the Canaanites from other documents embodied in Judges and Samuel.

man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 17:6). We have already shown this to mean that the community was under separate clan rulers, and that there was an absence of generalized social machinery. The so-called "judges," exploited in the book bearing that name, were heroes of local authority, afterward taken up into the national tradition and invested with powers which they never had in fact.

Thus we see that in the Judges period there were no national authorities either among the Israelites or the Canaanites. If the general questions at issue between the two peoples were to be settled, it would be necessary for each side to formulate its position, and appoint an authority vested with power to deal with the opposite side. But nothing of the kind was done. The requisite social machinery could not have been constructed at that period. Thus it was that the battle of Esdraelon settled nothing. The political status of the community as a whole remained an open question. Consequently, the relations between the gods remained likewise open—with the impressive tradition of hostility in the background. We therefore must picture the land of Canaan during the Judges period as the home of many alien social groups. While these groups fell into two main divisions, neither division was answerable to a common authority.

We now take up the conjugation of these alien groups. This was a movement which proceeded gradually. It was accomplished in two ways: by *covenant* between groups on each side, and by *intermarriage*. First, with regard to covenants. It is necessary to bear in mind the principle of contact between alien groups in ancient society. The normal relation is that of hostility *unless* modified by special treaty.

(1) Our first notice concerns the clan of Heber the Kenite and the Canaanite city of Hazor. Heber's clan was, to all intents and purposes, Israelite. His people had made a friendly covenant with the Israelite clans at Mount Sinai; and both peoples worshiped the same god, Yahweh. We read: "There was *peace* between Jabin, king of Hazor, and the house of Heber the Kenite" (Judg. 4:17). This very significant notice was written in full view of the fact that the normal relation between alien

social groups was that of hostility, unless modified by special covenant.

(2) Our next notice relates to the Israelite clan of Abiezer, located in the hill country of Ephraim, and the adjacent Canaanite city of Shechem (Judg., chaps. 6–9). The chief of the Israelite clan was Gideon. This man had a Canaanite wife, who resided with her own people in Shechem. A son was born to them, named Abimelech (Judg. 8:31). After a time conditions became ripe for a league between the two peoples. Abimelech, who had the blood of both Israel and Canaan in his veins, became prince over the united people. “And all the men of *Shechem* assembled themselves together. . . . and made Abimelech king. . . . And Abimelech was prince over *Israel* three years” (Judg. 9:6, 22). The religious expression of this league was the common worship of Baal-berith (Judg. 8:33), elsewhere spoken of as *El-berith* (chap. 9:46). *Berith* is the Hebrew term for “covenant.” The two compound words just noted have practically the same content, signifying in the one case “*Master* of the covenant,” and in the other “*God* of the covenant.” Probably the god in question was Yahweh.

(3) The next instance is that of the covenant between an Israelite clan, or clans, and the four Canaanite cities known as Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath-jearim. The circumstances under which this covenant was made are obscure. All we can be certain of is, that there *was* a covenant (II Sam. 21:2). No mention of it is found in Judges. But according to a suspicious account in Joshua, the peace treaty was obtained by deceit on the part of these Canaanite cities at the time of the invasion (Josh., chap. 9). It is certain that the Gibeonites became worshipers of Israel’s god. We find that a *bamah*, or “high place,” containing an altar to Yahweh, was established there: “And the king went to Gibeon, to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place. . . . In Gibeon Yahweh appeared to Solomon in a dream by night” (I Kings 3:4, 5).

(4) With regard to intermarriage, we have just noticed the connection between Gideon, the Israelite clan chief, and the woman of the Canaanite city of Shechem. A similar case is that

of king David and the Canaanite women of Jerusalem. We have seen that this city remained foreign to the Israelites all through the Judges period (Judg. 19:10-12), and that it was captured by David after his elevation to the throne (II Sam. 5:6, 7). With reference to the point under consideration, we read: "And David took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem after he was come from Hebron" (vs. 13). It was with such facts as these in view that the editor of Judges published the following general notice: "And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites . . . and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons" (Judg. 3:5, 6).

(5) Confirmatory evidence bearing upon the relations between Israelites and Canaanites, both in respect of covenant and of marriage, are to be found in the Book of Genesis. It should be remembered that this book was written after the institution of the monarchy. Its traditions cannot be taken as reliable history of the dim ages before the invasion; but they are good evidence about social conditions after the Israelite conquest. The patriarch Abraham is represented as being in league with Amorites (Gen. 14:13). The patriarch Judah married a Canaanite woman, who bore him children (chap. 38). The patriarch Simeon had a son by a Canaanite woman (46:10).

Thus it is plain that there was conjugation of alien social groups long before the Israelite monarchy. But this movement had no force in settlement of the general situation. Furthermore, there is no evidence that all the groups were involved in the approachment. Even if they were, the outstanding fact remains that there was no general social machinery on either side. We shall show in due time and order that, owing to the peculiar conditions of its origin, the Israelite monarchy itself was powerless to settle the civil and religious condition of the community. At present, however, it is needful to call attention to another important fact in regard to the local treaties and adjustments here under discussion. The fact is eloquent and emphatic. It leads forward to a generalization which, we believe, not only throws

light back over the ground already covered, but will shed illumination over the future course of this inquiry.

Although covenants were made between local groups in obedience to a strong tendency toward social assimilation, it should now be pointed out that there was a powerful contrary tendency to *break* these covenants. A number of cases are in point: (1) The covenant between the clan of Heber and the Canaanite city of Hazor was broken by Heber's wife, Jael, when she killed Sisera, the Canaanite general. Not only so; but the Deborah Song itself proclaims the most complete Israelite sympathy for this disregard of treaty obligations when it says (Judg. 5:24): "Blessed among women shall Jael be." (2) The covenant between the Israelite clan of Abiezer and the Canaanite city of Shechem was violently broken when the Israelites turned and slew the Shechemites, and beat down their city (Judg. 9:45). An echo of this is found in the traditions of Genesis (chap. 34), in which two of the Israelite patriarchs agree with the Shechemites upon the covenant of circumcision, but afterward enter the city and murder all the males. (3) The covenant between Israelites and the Gibeonite confederacy was broken by the Israelite Saul and his followers, in their "zeal" for the children of Israel and Judah, when they put to death some of the Gibeonites (II Sam. 21:2).

These vivid illustrations carry us from the early times of the settlement in Canaan up to the monarchy. They emphasize again the antipathy between Israel and Canaan; the absence of general authorities on both sides; and, finally, another element of difficulty in the problem—the weakness of local authorities.

The available evidence gives ample ground for the following proposition:

*The Israelite invasion of Canaan brought a lot of alien social groups together into a situation whose general terms no authority was competent to define. The disposition of social elements, from the Invasion to the Exile, not only maintained the antithesis between Yahweh and the Baalim, but developed its content.*

From the standpoint of pure sociology, the intrusion of these rough, desert clans into the midst of an ancient settled community raised but one problem: *adjustment*. Whoever undertakes to

decide off-hand the "absolute ethics" of the Israelite conquest of Canaan, the European conquest of America, or any other like movement of population, will find himself in a confusing maze of contradictions. It is true that one set of late biblical documents undertakes to justify the conquest by the wickedness of the earlier inhabitants, the Canaanites or Amorites. Thus we read: "Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thy heart, dost thou go in to possess their land. But for the wickedness of these nations Yahweh thy god doth drive them out before thee" (Deut. 9:5). According to the same view, the land of Canaan would have been given, at a much earlier day, to Abraham; but in the time of the father of the faithful the "iniquity" of the Amorite was not yet "full" (Gen. 15:16). This, of course, raises again the hexateuchal view of the *herem* as an item in a supernatural divine campaign against immoral polytheism. If this traditional view is correct, it is fair to ask why the Canaanites were actually left in possession of so much of the land that Yahweh gained an early reputation as god of the hills, but not as god of the valleys. If to this it be replied that the Israelites were not able to obtain the valleys and walled cities because they were unfaithful and disobedient to God, it is then in order to ask what is to be done with the document that pictures united Israel, under command of Joshua, sweeping away all the former population and taking over the entire country. "So Joshua smote all the land, the hill country, and the south, and the lowland, and the slopes, and all their kings. He left none remaining; but he utterly destroyed all that breathed, as Yahweh, the god of Israel, commanded" (Josh. 10:40). The fact is, that the different philosophies of history in the Bible cancel each other, leaving us to deal with the situation as best we may from the standpoint of modern criticism.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Other biblical views of the situation are that Yahweh commanded *not* to drive the Canaanites out quickly, but "little by little," in order (1) that wild beasts might not multiply in the land while yet the Israelites were too few in number to fill the territory; or (2) that some of the Canaanites might remain to teach the Israelites the art of war; or (3) to prove the Israelites, whether or not they would obey the commandments of Yahweh given by the mouth of Moses (cf. Judg. 3:1-4; Deut. 7:22; Ex. 23:29 f.).

In the next instalment, under the title "The Sanctuaries of Yahweh," we shall show how the disposition of places of worship reflected the social condition just described. Setting out in view of the hexateuchal assumption that there was, from the first, a general authority which promptly caused the establishment of one, general, legitimate sanctuary, it will be shown that no such place was in existence during the national history of Israel. We shall see that the various groups, which afterward coalesced into the nation, established many *local* sanctuaries of their own for the worship of Yahweh; that these places were treated as legitimate by the leading men of the people; and that their existence is an other proof of the lack of social generalization.