

idea of religion and of God by absorbing true elements from the culture with which it comes in contact. We have now passed the time when we regard any great system of faith and worship as completely and absolutely false; we know that in a world which belongs to God such a system would soon fall to pieces. Further, when two systems come into contact and conflict, while that which is higher may ultimately prevail, it can do so only on the condition of completing itself even from a hostile source. Through all these struggles with the Canaanites the Hebrews maintained the name of Yahweh their God, and their faith in Him was the bond of union and the inspiration of any heroic and successful action. As we have already suggested, tribal traditions and family usages remained in full force, and only gradually and by slow action and reaction were they eliminated or reinterpreted and transformed. The same process took place in regard to Canaanite customs. To some of these the real representatives of Hebrew religion were sternly and consistently opposed while the mass of the people were easily induced to follow the prevailing fashions. As they became more completely a settled people they must be more thoroughly influenced by the religious beliefs and ceremonies connected with the culture of the soil. The name Baal means lord or owner; it is not in itself the name of the god of a whole land or tribe, but of the patron god of a particular locality. The shade of meaning attached at any time to such a word must necessarily be vague and variable. To the popular mind there were many Baals, just as in Roman Catholic countries, among simple and unreflecting people, "Our Lady" of a particular city acquires special local qualities, and is differentiated from other manifestations of the One Virgin (Notre Dame de Paris, Notre Dame de Lourdes, &c.). The Baal meant the divinity that gave fruitfulness to a piece of soil. As such fruitfulness is similar in all cases, it might easily be generalized and a general significance be given to the name; but side by side the belief could remain in a number of particular Baals. The Israelite teachers maintained that Yahweh was one (Dt. 6/4). They were clear on that point. There might be many Baals—that would need investigation—but as to this