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The religious background of Deuteronomy

"THE RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF DEUTERONOMY"

Submitted as a Senior

Thesis by

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BODY OF THE THESIS

THE RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF DEUTERONOMY

The forces of life and history are forces of actions and reactions, movements and countermovements, reformations and counter-reformations. The Protestant Reformation was followed by the Catholic counter-reformation. The Puritan movement in England was followed by the reaqtion under the restored monarchy. The skepticism of Hume aroused the slumbering mind of Kant. The rationalism of the eighteenth century theologians resulted in the reaction under Schleiermacher. The early rigorous regime of John Calvin at Geneva was followed by a reaction which sent him into exile. There is action and interaction, impact of personality upon personality; great forces of life meet and clash and history is made. So in the study of the religious background of Deuteronomy we have the study of a reaction. Strong religious forces backed up by a long history came into conflict and Deuteronomy was the result of the clash. My thesis therefore is the statement of a reaction, DEUTERONOMY IS A PRIESTLY-PROPHETIC REACTION AGAINST THE SYNCRETISTIC TENDENCIES OF THE TIME. The three great forces are priestly, pro-

phetic,and syncretistic.The significant thing in the religious background of the book is the interaction of these three forces. There may have been and perhaps were other forces of an economic and political character but the three primary religious conditions back of the book were the three above mentioned.

Throughout this thesis the following propositions are assumed: (1) The date of Deuteronomy is during the reign of Manasseh or the early years of the reign of Josiah.The conclusions reached by Dr. Driver and other critics as to the date are accepted without formal statement of the arguments by which they arrived at their conclusions. There are those who would put the date as early as the reign of Hezekiah and with such there is no reason for argument because even if the book were assigned to that date, the main argument of this thesis would not be invalidated,namely,that the book is a priestly-prophetic reaction against the syncretistic tendencies of the time. However, all conditions are most satisfactorily met by the assumption that the book was written in the reign of Manasseh or the early years of the reign of Josiah and therefore that

date is assumed.

(2) The essential unity of the book is also assumed. "At least 4:44-26 and chapter 28 are a unit". Kuenen,Hist. of Israel,P.9. Perhaps even more belonged to the original Deuteronomy but this much at least is assumed to be a unit.

(3) It is also assumed that the book found by Hilkiah and read to Josiah is our Deuteronomy.We are forced to this conclusion by the fact that reforms ascribed to Josiah in 2K.23 agree with the program of action outlined by Deuteronomy.

Having stated the thesis and made plain certain assumptions,the next thing is to consider somewhat at length the influence of the Canaanitic religion upon the Hebrew people. By so doing we will trace a very important element in the religious background of Deuteronomy.

When the Israelites came into Canaan,they found there a settled agricultural people while they themselves had been nomadic. They also found a people who were more civilized than they. Furthermore, the religion of the Canaanites was different from their own. Since both nations were

Semites,there were many points that they had in common but still there were also differences between the two. The Canaanites were conquered but they were not exterminated,they intermarried with the Israelites,and soon the influence of their religious practices began to be felt by the Israelites. The ordinary Israelite was bound to be influenced by the religious practices of those with whom he was coming constantly in contact. It came to pass in time that the ritual observances of a Hebrew sanctuary and a Canaanitic sanctuary were so similar that the mass of people did not separate by any well-marked line between Jehovah worship and Baal worship. "Israel adopted the civilization of the Canaanites and passed from a nomadic to an agricultural people. The Sabbath,which the ancient Babylonians had, and the three great festivals of Passover,Weeks, and Tabernacles were borrowed from the Canaanites. The holy places of worship Bethel,Dan,Gilgal,Beersheba, Sichem,Gibeon,Shiloh,and Ramah were all adopted outright from the Canaanites".Cornill,Prphets of Israel, P.26. Finally, it was the Canaanites and not the Israelites that were absorbed but this did

not take place without the Canaanites making some contribution to the Israelites. The way that these non-Israelite influences worked upon the religion of Israel can best be studied by examining some of the concrete things that influenced the religion of the Israelites. First let us study the so-called holy places.

The Israelites, upon entering Canaan, found holy places among the people. On gaining possession of the country they retained these as sanctuaries for themselves without having the least doubt as to whether their course of action might be pleasing to God. And provided Jehovah alone was worshipped at such places, no one would have any objection to the form of worship formerly used there. It is true that in the Wilderness period under the leadership of Moses that they probably worshipped together at one place but now under new conditions where they were widely scattered the natural thing was to accept the shrines of the land, especially was this true because the shrines were on the high mountains and at the wells and fountains and springs. "The God of heaven was worshipped on high mountains which seemed most befitting thrones for the heavenly

One. In the sacred gloom of the groves one felt the very breath of Deity. Regions where natural phenomena seemed to indicate a special revelation of God's presence-fountains and wells-these were one and all regarded as places at which the Deity delighted to assemble his worshippers.On such places the ancient inhabitants of the land had built their shrines". Schultz,O.T.Theol. Vol. I. P.206-7.These places were adopted by the Hebrews and thus there became a multiplication of altars throughout the land. The historical books imply the existence of such sanctuaries but in none of the notices of them in these books is there any mark of disapproval or any intimation that a law is being infringed upon. The local sanctuaries retained their popularity through the period of the Kings. Time showed that it was impossible to insure them against abuse and to preserve the worship connected with them from the contamination of Canaanitish worship and idolatry. (IIK. 23:13; I K.14:23f;Jer. 7:31;17:3;19:5). Hosea 2:5 shows us that some of the Israelites actually worshipped the Baalim at these sanctuaries. For the most part Jehovah was also worshipped and became simply one of the Baalim of the land.

There was also danger that monotheism would suffer by a multiplicity of shrines and altars. Would the Jehovah at Dan be the same as the Jehovah who was worshipped at Bethshemesh? Thus we see that these holy places came in time to be a thorne in the flesh to those who were concerned with the preservation of a strict rigorous Jehovah worship.

Another element in the religion of the Canaanites that affected the religion of the Hebrews was tree-worship. "Tree worship pure and simple is attested for Arabia in the case of the sacred date-palm-Nejiran. It was adored at the annual feasts.Among the Canaanites we have the testimony of Philo Biblius that the plants of the earth were in ancient times esteemed as gods because men drew from them the support of their lives. No Canaanite high place was complete without its sacred tree standing beside the altar. The local sanctuaries of the Hebrews,which the prophets regarded as purely heathenish and which were certainly modelled upon Canaanite usage, were altar sanctuaries.They were set up habitually under green trees and the altar was incomplete unless an ashera stood beside

it. The ashera must have been either a living tree or a tree like post and in all probability originally either form was admissible. The oldest altars stood under actual trees but in the period of the kings the place of the living tree was taken by a dead post or pole planted in the ground like an English Maypole. These were an object of worship for the Israelites,for the prophets put them on the same line with other sacred symbols,images ci.pi, and Baal pillars. Isa. 17:8 and Micah 5:14."
Rel. of Sem. Smith, P.169-172.This quotation shows how tree-worship was preserved in the ashera and how the Israelites in large numbers acquired such idolatry from the Canaanites. The prohibition of DT.16:21 is good evidence that the practice prohibited existed as a part of the religious background of the book. Contrary to the masses of the Israelites whose Jehovah worship had all the characteristics of Baal worship, the prophets distinguished sharply between Jehovah and physical nature. Accordingly we have them protesting against the use of the ashera.(See Dt. 7:5;12:3;16:21,22 where the destruction of the ashera among the Canaanites is urged and the introduction of such symbols into the worship of Jehovah is prohibited.)

A famous ashera which stood in Samaria is alluded to in 2 K.13:6;Manasseh erected one in the temple at Jerusalem (2.K.21:7) ;and this was destroyed by Josiah (2 K. 23:7).That the ashera was a symbol rather than a deity Robertson Smith has clearly shown.But whatever its symbolism may have been,its heathen associations were enough for the Deuteronomist to condemn it.

Another syncretistic tendency among the Israelites is to be found in their religious associations with the heathen pillars or massebah. The pillar is mentioned as a symbol of the Canaanites by the writers of Ex.23:34,Dt. 7:5;12:3. It is alluded to as erected in or near a temple of Baal in 2K.3:2; 10:26;and in proximity to the asherim in 1K.14:23;2K.17:10;18:4;23:14. Robertson Smith tells us that the sacred tree is more than an altar,for in the Hebrew and Canaanitic sanctuaries the altar does not supersede the pillar.The two are found side by side in the same sanctuary,the altar as a piece of sacrifical apparatus and the pillar as a visible symbol or embodiment of the presence of the deity which in the process of time comes to be fashioned and carved in various ways,till ultimately it becomes a statue or anthropomorphic idol of stone.

This is of course an advance over the worship of natural objects but could scarcely be tolerated by the prophets even though the mass of the Hebrews used it as a convenience for ritual purposes and asn an idol. Dt. 12:3 and Micah 5:12 condemn these pillars and this is evidence that their worship must have existed as a part of the syncretistic tendencies of the time.Hosea describes them as a part of the sanctuaries of northenn Israel during his time.We may therefore conclude that the pillars at Shechem,Gilgal,and Bethel were looked up on not merely as memorials of historical events but as necessary parts of the ritual of worship by the great mass of the Hebrews. At one time these pillars played an important part in the worship of Jehovah but they were proscribed in time because of their heathen associations.

Human sacrifice was another of the practices that prevailed to a certain extent among the Israelites.The expression used is,"To cause to pass through the fire". "The allusions in the Old Testament are not sufficient to show either the nature or the object of the practice but it is mentioned in Deuteronomy not as a form of idolatry but specifically as a superstition." (Driver,Com. on Deuteronomy,P.222)

That child sacrifice was common among the Carthaginians and the Phoenicians is certain. In fact it was practiced secretly among the Carthaginians until the time of Tertullian. "Among the Canaanites whom the Israelites conquered but did not exterminate this custom prevailed. There is also abundant evidence that in later times the Hebrews practiced the rite. At Jerusalem there was a regularly appointed place where the parents burned their children, both boys and girls, in honor of Baal and Moloch. It was the valley of Hinnon just outside the city walls. Ahaz made his son to pass through the fire (2 Chron. 28:3 and 2 K. 16:3). King Manasseh made his children pass through the fire (2Chron. 33:6 and 2 K. 21:6). When we remember, however, that the Israelites were of the same Semitic stock, we are perhaps inclined to surmise that the Israelites may have brought with them into Palestine the seeds which bore such ghastly fruit in later times in the valley of Hinnon". (Frazer, Golden Bough, Pt. III, The Dying God. P. 169ff) We find traces of child sacrifice in the tender stories of Abraham and Isaac and in the story of Jephthah's daughter. These could be told as stories

only among a people according to whose reminiscences and point of view human sacrifice, although something extraordinary, was in no way incompatible or revolting. It had disappeared as a regular part of the sacrificial system but it was not in extraordinary cases regarded as wicked or inconceivable. This practice is emphatically prohibited in Lev.18:21 and thus probably existed after the time of Josiah as a gloomy relic of a gloomy religion. It is referred to in Dt. 12:31 as the climax of all that is bad in Canaanitic worship. The custom was somewhat prevalent in Judah from the time of Ahaz and is also mentioned in the compiler's history of the northern kingdom.(2 K.17:17) This practice was one of the most horrible of the practices to which the later Israelites were a party and came in for the condemnation of the Deuteronomist.

The prohibition of Dt.23:17-18 would seem to indicate that religious prostitution prevailed among the Israelites at that time or was among their neighbors and needed therefore to be watched. In fact II K. 23:7 would indicate that it actually did prevail at the Temple at Jerusalem. Such a rite was likely to grow up in connection with an agricultural cultus where men were supposed to rejoice before God.

These harlots were a part of the regular establishment sacred to the god. This custom does not appear among the Israelites as nomads but crept in after they came into Palestine.(Hos.4:14; 1 K.14:24;15:12;22:46; and 2 K.23:7)

Another very strong syncretistic influence came to bear upon the Israelites when the Assyrians came into power. There was a close connection between the nation and its god in the mind of the ancient. For one nation to be victorious usually meant that the god of that nation was stronger than the god of the defeated nation. Naturally the rapid rise of Assyria would make a great impression on the mind of the Hebrews and the gods of the Assyrians would be regarded as very powerful.Moreover the worship of the heavenly host makes a natural appeal to the ancient mind. The beauty of the heavenly bodies and their wonderful but inexplainable movements appealed to the mind of the people and constituted a seductive snare to their worship."The attraction of the worship of heavenly bodies in an era of convulsion is to be traced to their universal non-national power and position.They were a refuge

for the faith which the ineffective terrestrial deities had failed to justify. They were outside the power of even Assyria." (Wodd,Politics and ReL.of Ancient Israel,P,169) In the time of Ahaz this star-worship became prominent and allied itself with the popular primitive Jehovah-Baal worship. As Driver says,"Next to image worship,the veneration of the host of heaven is mentioned as that form of idolatry into which the Israelites of the writer's day are most likely to fall!" The Deuteronomist rises superior to this cultus and says that Jehovah has given these heavenly bodies to the other nations for them to worship while he has adopted Israel for his own inheritance.

Other prohibitions of Deuteronomy would indicate that there were still more tendencies that needed to be offset.

(1) Dt.18:11 forbids the consultation of departed spirits. This legislation is probably due to the fact that with the consultation of the departed spirits there was the heathen association of the worship of the dead.

(2)Swine were among the animals that were sacrificed to heathen gods and thus they were tabooed.

(3) "Thou shalt not boil a kid in its mother's milk" is directed against a heathen rite or custom.

(4) All animals offered to Jehovah in sacrifice were to be without blemish. Probably in idolatrous sacrifice no importance was attached to whether it was or was not without a blemish.

(5) The provision against mourner's gashing themselves or shaving the forepart of the head was proclaimed because these things reflected tendencies towards heathenism, for such customs were quite common. The practice was common down to the time of Jeremiah. (Jer. 16:6; 41:5; 47:5; Hos. 7:14; Am. 8:10; Isa. 3:24; 15:2) The practice was probibited on the ground that Israel is holy to Jehovah and should therefore not yield to excessive grief.

(6) The provision in Dt.22:15 that sexes are not to interchange garments is urged not so much as a matter of conventional propriety but rather against the simmulated changes of sex which occurred in Canaanitic and Syrian heathenism.

The concrete items given above at such length will serve to show how great and how strong were the elements taken from the Canaanitic cultus. But there were also elements in Canaan

which the prophets accepted and did not denounce, as for example, the three feasts which were probably originally agricultural in character. But for the most part the prophets connected the popular superstitious worship with the religion of the Canaanites.

A description of the reign of Manasseh will best summarize for us the syncretistic tendencies of the times. Under this King, who ruled for a period of fifty-five years, the popular party with its syncretism found a powerful champion on the throne of David. The account in II Kings is probably colored by the prophetic author and reflects the theological viewpoint of a somewhat later day, but nevertheless it must be true that in the age of Manasseh the popular rather than the prophetic party was in full power. "He built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared altars to Baal, and made an ashera, as did Ahab, King of Israel, and worshipped the host of heaven and served them. And he built an altar for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the temple of Jehovah. And he made his son to pass through the fire, and practiced

augury, and used enchantment, and dealt with them that had familiar spirits, and with wizards. And he set up the graven image of Asherah, that he had made, in the house of Jehovah. Moreover, Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to the other." In such graphic words as these does the author of Kings describe the conditions of the time. Manasseh restored the little altars erected by Ahaz on the roof of the temple for Babylonian star worship, constructed larger altars in the two fore courts of the temple for the same cultus with the intent that these ladder should be available for the whole people at their pleasure. He provided for the Phoenician Astarte a model cultus in the temple itself. A statue of the goddess was erected and close by were several small houses where unchaste priestesses wove sacred garments for similiar images among the people. Ritual became gaudy and elaborate and incense appeared as an essential constituent of the service. Lascivious festivals and wild orgies which so often go with a religion of nature and the inhuman custom of sacrificing children flourished at this time, and were sactioned by the King.

Manasseh kept sun-chariots and sun-horses close to the temple. Manasseh would tolerate no opposition and thus "innoncent blood" flowed in Jerusalem and filled it from one end to the other" (2Ki. 21:16 24.4; Jer. 2:30) These conditions prevailed until the time of Josiah and so great a hold did they have upon the people that the reformation of Josiah ddd not root them out. We still find Jeremiah and Ezekiel complining of it. Jer. 44:4 Eze. 8:6ff).

Such were the conditons during the reign of Manasseh. Now what were the reasons for such course of action?

(1) H. P. Smith in his O. T. History P; 255 maintains that the women of the palace were responsible to a certain degree. They were devoted to the ancient surperstitions. The necromancers and dealers in charms and talismans are usually women according to the Old Testament records. Manasseh came to the throne very young and naturally would be much influended by the harem. Many of the courtiers of Hezekiah were probably out of sympathy with his reforms and it is natural that the crown prince fell into the hands of a clique belonging to the opposition party. This argument of Smith's

has weight but there are more fundamental reasons.

(2) The contention of H. P. Smith that it was as a faithful vassal of Assyria that Manasseh honored the Assyrian gods is a strong reason and in this he is sustained by Kittel and Cornill. Ahaz had introdueed the worship of Assyrian deities, Hezekiah had opposed it because he was more or less independent of Assyria, while Manasseh who was a vassal of Assyria again introduced that worship. It seemed illogical to some to withhold from the gods of Assyria the worship which was their due as well as Jehovah's. The historical events following Isaiah were not such as to recommend the reform of the prophets. Judah was practically dependent upon Assyria. The overpowering strength of Assyria made a deep impression upon the popular mind. It might not so much upon the minds of the prophets, but with the ordinary mass of people the gods of such a mighty people must be mighty gods. Were they not more powerful than the gods of the nations they subjugated? Thus the Assyrian-Babylonian worship of stars was introduced and made a strong appeal to the populace.

(3) Probably there is still a deeper reason for the wide acceptance of these syncretistic tendencies. This reason roots deep in human nature itself. The religion advocated by Manasseh was a much easier, less exacting, and ethically lower religion than the stern, rigorous, blazing-white ethical purity of the religion of the prophets. "The half-heathen Jehovah must at all costs be restored to His place in opposition to the stern holy god of the prophets. The old popular religion raised its head and fought. What occurred under Manasseh is simply the strong violent reaction of the old syncretism which got firmly planted in the heart of masses against the strict ethical monotheism of the prophets. Those who clung to the popular religion did not wish its fresh, joyous worship of nature with its altars, high places, images, and its voluptuous accompaniments to be starved in favor of a strict sober conception of God". (Kittel "History of Hebrews" 371). Even in our own times there are those who are looking for an easy religion--a religion which expresses itself in ritual rather than ethical obedience to

the will of God, a religion whose conception of God is such as to chloroform the conscience and see but little connection between the contemplation of God and its spiritual corollary--obedience to the God that is worshipped. When we reflect upon how inherent this is to human life even in our own time, then we may better understand why it was that the worship introduced by Manasseh made such a popular appeal.

(4) Add to this natural interest in an easy religion the fact that much of this was in direct touch with the past and we have the strongest and most significant reasons for the triumph under Manasseh of these syncretistic tendencies. "The ancient and honored relics that could be traced back to the Patriarchs and to Moses, before which David knelt, which from time immemorial had been to every Israelite the most beloved and sacred objects on earth, should now of a sudden be considered as filth to be cast to the moles and the bats because a few fanatics in Jerusalem did not find them to their taste. If the new god whom the prophets preached had appeared more power-

ful than the older god whom their fathers worshipped, if things had gone on better--well and good. But events di not seem to bear this out" Cornill "Prophets of Israel" P. 72f. So reasoned the popular mind. Many of them regarded the prophets as fanatics they were so far in advance of their times. They regarded themselves perhaps as connected with the gods of their fathers through the local sanctuaries. Who were these innovators? They connected themselves with the ancient and honored relics that could be traced back to the patriarchs" For all these reasons, therefore, slight wonder is it that these tendencies existed in Israel.

Having discussed the Syncretistic tendencies of the popular party we must now turn our attention to another great influence which is in the religious background of Deuteronomy and under whose influence that book was produced--the prophetic party: Not so strong in numbers as in influence, this party could not let the conditons which existed during the reign of Manasseh go without a protest. "The innocent blood" mentioned in II Ki. 21:16 is undoubtedly that of the prophets. We, therefore,

cannot understand the religious background of Deuteronomy until we understand the prophetic movement, especially in its relation to popular religion:

The Prophets harked back to Moses whose spirit they regarded themselves to posess. And thus we need to understand what was the contribution of Moses to the Hebrew religion. And here we have views ranging in estimate from the ultra-liberal view which gives Moses but little religious significance, to the ultra-conservative view which makes him the author of the Pentateuch. The religion of Moses was not a mere nature religion retaining the heathenism common to all the Semites but merely transferring to it the name of Jehovah. If we accept this view, we could not explain its subsequent development when the Israelites met the higher civilization of the Canaanites after crossing the Jordan. Let us now bring together the peculiarities which raised the religion of Moses above the heathen religions.

(i) The religion of Moses centres in his conception of God's relation to His people. Jehovah

is the God of Israel. He combines the true thought of the unity of God with the feeling of closest dependence upon God. The theoretical question of monotheism is not raised at all. "Jehovah is the God of Israel and Israel is his people", is the Mosaic formula. His work was not of a theological sort. He did not concern himslf with the questions whether Jehovah was the one only God and what His relation was to the other Elohim. His work was to get his people to recognize Jehovah as their God. This was a result which was never entirely lost and which formed the starting point of all later moral and religious development. Thus Moses really formed his nation by making Jehovah the God of all the tribes. This was a natural outcome of his religious views. "The foundation upon which at periods Israel's sense of its national unity rested was religicus in its character. Jehovah is God of Israel and Israel is the people of Jehovah was his formula and it was thru Moses that this faith became the fundamental basis of national existence and unity". (Wellhausen History Israel P. 437.) "By giving to Israel a national deity Moses made

of it a nation and cemented together by this ideal band, the heterogeneous elements of the nation into a unity". (Cornill, Prophets of Israel, P.25) There was no heathen mythology in the religion of Moses, deity was never differentiated sexually. In fact it is impossible to the Hebrew language to form the wordm goddess. The pure and the ethical were also emphasized but the monotheism was latent rather than explicit. The Israelite could only serve Jehovah and this tended toward monotheism as against polytheism.

(2) The second great element in the religion of Moses was that Jehovah had led the nation out of Egypt by signs and wonders and had proved himself a god of history as well as of nature Therein had he manifested himself as superior to the gods of the heathen and also a god of grace as well as of power. Consequently they were to serve Jehovah and Him only. By a gracious act of deliverance he had brought them to himself and now they ought to serve Him and to them He was to be father and king. From the point of view of the Israelites this redemption from Egypt was their redemption. To the events of the Exodus they always attached this

significance. To it both prophets and Deuteronomist constantly appeal.

(3) Other miscellaneous elements of Moses' religion may be stated: (a) It was imageless (Knudson) (b) Centralized, due to the donditions of the time (Knudson) (c) He was founder of the torah. "From the historical tradition it is certain that Moses was the founder of the Torah. But the legislative tradition cannot tell what the positive contents were". (Wellhausen "Hist Israel" P. 438.

Thus Moses great significance is rather religious than political(So hold Stade and Kuenen) The general impression which his personality left on the memory of his people is such as to constitute proof of this view of Moses. His genius may have been political and economic and perhaps was, but it is in the field of religion that his great genius lies and it is with Moses that the prophets desired to connect. It was the name of Moses which had a magic appeal in the most pious circles of the Hebrew people. The strength of the religious tradition in regard to Moses leads me to believe that many modern critics go too far in their detractions from his religious significance.

Back of the prophetic party in the time of Deuteronomy there was not only this tradition of Moses there was also the tradition of Elijah who may in a sense be called the first of the great prophets: Under Ahab a temple to the Tyrian Baal was erected at Samaria and it was against this that Elijah cried out. He was not opposing Baal on the grounds of principle, for when he traveled in Phoenicia, the special home of Baal, he exhibits the power of his miracles in the service of a worshipper of Baal; but in Israel, there was not room for Baal there, Jehovah alone was God and King. "In his conflict with the Queen he reasserts the ancient jealousy of Jehovah, a jealousy that would brook no other god in Israel and least of all, a nature god like the Tyrian Baal. He not merely revived the teaching of Moses. He had a new element (1) Message of doom (2) He does not believe in the existence of Baal. He would have denounded any other god as no god" "Beacon Lights of Prophecy" P. 16-18) This was implicit in Moses; it became explicit in Elijah when the occasion was found in the apostasy of Ahab's time. Elijah was firstin

whom the practical monotheistic conviction came to clear expression. Elijah is conscious of God and it is the energy of that consciousness that makes him rebel against the least suspicion of Syncretism. In these he is building on the foundation laid by Moses." All these men keep adding to the work of Moses. They build on the foundations which he laid. The prophets have the feeling therefore that they are bringing nothing new. But as faithful and just stewards they have put to interest the pound they inherited from Moses" (Cornill P. 36.)

But it is primarily in the literary prophets that we find the spiritual fathers and founders of the prophetic party. These men saw clearly the conditions of the time and perceived that deliverance could come only by ad herence to the spiritual non-idolatrous worship of Jehovah: They held that sacrifice was an affair of quite subordinate importance and unless accompanied by righteous action and national justice it was worse than nothing. With these prophets the moral holiness of Jehovah comes to expression and they elevate their religion into an ethical monotheism.

" God is a God of justice; religion the moral relation of man-- not a conformable pillow but an ethical exaction. Right and justice exist beyond the boundaries of Israel. If the God of Israel is the god of justice, then his kingdom is coextensive with justice. The Moabites are subject to it and all other nations. Thus through Amos, the God of Israel becomes the God of the entire world and the religion of this God a universal religion" says Cornill in a splendid passage. These prophets also demand a rigorous separation of the worship of God from the worship of nature. Everything contradictory to the holy and spiritual nature of God must be eliminated as paganism. With this message there went also the message of doom. The ethical holiness of Jehovah would demand it. There was only one way for Israel to be saved: The religious, moral, and social evils in the nation must disappear and they must return from their apostasy to the spiritual worship of Jehovah. Jehovah will reject them but he will not withdraw his love from them entirely. He will bring them back to himself once more because he loves them. This is the message of Hosea.

How these prophets, especially, Hosea, affected the prophetic authors of Deuteronomy will be shown later. It will then become apparent what a large element in the religious background of Deuteronomy they constituted.

During the reign of Hezekiah under the influence of Isaiah we have the first definite effort on the part of the prophetic group to work a reform in the cultus. "Hezekiah removed the high places, and brake the pillars and cut down the ashera, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made" II Ki. 18:4. The genuineness of this passage has been contested and in its present form it is undoubtedly not pre-exilic but Kittel and others contend for the genuineness of the information that it contains. He also contends that it was the aim of Hezekiah and of those who supported him to limit the worship of Jehovah to Jerusalem. Perhaps Isaiah's doctrine of the inviolability of Jerusalem would make for this view. It may have seemed to these men as it later seemed to the Deuteronomist that the sanctuaries outside of Jerusalem must be suppressed in order that monotheism might be preserved and the cultus purified. For if Jehovah was worshipped at

the local shrines, there was always danger that it might not be the same Jehovah who was worshipped at Zion. In this way polytheism rather than monotheism would triumph and heathenism would be restored. Just what the limits of the reform of Hezekiah were it is hard to state. Certain it is that the reform was not lasting. The people were not ready for such a far-reaching and significant program that involved such a sharp break with the things to which they were accustomed and which they associated with the past. It was too great a revolution to be carried through all at once. Nevertheless a beginning had been made and when Isaiah died, he left a group of disciples who became a prophetic party which grew and became more and more powerful as the years went by until in the 1st of the reign of Manasseh and the first of the reign of Josiah they became a mighty influence. The reform under Hezekiah was different from that under Isaiah but it blazed the way and led to the formation of a definite prophetic party and in that way it was very significant.

Wellhausen says that Isaiah did not contemplate the destruction of the high places but

simply their purification. The destruction of the high places arose out of a despair of the possibility of cleansing them. Not all critics hold to this view but certainly by the time that Manasseh was reigning the prophetic party was agreed that something radical needed to be done. The work would be large for the prophets to accomplish alone and so an alliance was formed with the priests at Jerusalem. It is not argued that thiswas a formal alliance. It was rather an alliance that was based upon a necessity for united action, upon common interests, and upon a simiaar tendency of both of them to connect themselves with Moses as a spiritual father.

The events of the reign of Manasseh made an indelible impression upon the minds of the devout men of Israel whether priest or prophet. It became the settled conviction of the best spirits in the nation that Israel was doomed unless something was done. An alliance for action was necessary and the alliance was made between priest and prophet.

In the earlier days the prophets and the priests,at least in the Northern Kingdom , appear in strong antagonism to one another but in the Deuteronomic reform they apparently joined hands. Cornill

in "Prophets of Israel" P.81 has made a clear statement of the alliance," Men began to see the gravity of the situation and a change of heart was being wrought in the people. The prophetic party kept up a continuous and successful agitation. The priests at the Temple at Jerusalem must have been won over to it,at least influenced by it". And Wellhausen , "Hist. of Israel" P.26 reinforces Cornill," Prophets and priests appear to have made common cause in the prosecution of the work. It was the High priest Hilkiah who first discovered the book of the Law. The prophetess Hulda confirmed its divine contents. The priests and prophets were a prominent element in the assembly where the new law was promulgated. An intimate fellowship between these two classes appears to be characteristic of the whole course of the religious movement of Judah and to have been necessarily connected with the lines by which that movement advanced. Thus the change which now appeared was the common suggestion of both priest and prophet. Such a change would be in accord with the interests of the Temple and with those of the prophetic party of reform.

The theory of Todd that Deuteronomy

is the work of the nobles rather than of the priests and the prophets is interesting but of course cannot be held. His attitude is interesting as reflecting the type of mind that is always wanting to give a political and economic interpretation to all of the facts of the Bible rather than the religious interpretation which is justly theirs. There was a political and economic element in the reformation of Josiah and the centralization of worship at Jerusalem but to make this the main thing is to utterly misunderstand the whole tend of the religious life of the Hebrews. The result of the priestly-prophetic alliance was first of all the book of Deuteronomy itself, and second, the reformation under Josiah. Of these we are concerned with the book only

"It may have been during the dark days of Manasseh, when the spiritual energy of prophecy, no longer able to make its voice heard openly, nevertheless refused to be suppressed, and hopeful of better times, provided the spiritual rallying point, around which the disorganized forces of national religion could range themselves under happier auspices. Or it may have been later when the character of the young Josiah afforded promise of a speedier success, that the needful stimulus was found". (Driver, Int. to Com. On

Dt. P.51f) Thus Driver states his idea as to the date of the book but certain it is that men now felt that there was a necessity for the spiritual conceptions of the prophets to be put in some "ark of legal forms". The principles of the prophets needed to be put in some objective legal form so as to appeal to the popular mind and call them back from their Canaanitic and Assyrian practices. The result was the book of Deuteronomy.

In the production of Deuteronomy the writer connected with the past. The author simply goes a few steps further in the direction which had already been taken by others before his time. In his regulations as to priests he is simply stating something that had been in preparation since the days of Solomon. In the centralization of worship he is following the leadership of Hezekiah and the great Isaiah. Deuteronomy made certain things law that had already existed either as principle or custom for a long time. In this he was following the logic of facts to meet an urgent necessity. Deuteronomy connected with both the prophecy of the past and the legislation of the past. In the book there is an attempt to re-

alize in practice the ideals of the prophets, especially of Hosea and Isaiah, to transform the Judah of the reign of Manasseh into the "Holy Nation" pictured in Isaiah's vision. "What is new in Deuteronomy is not the matter but the form. It is anything but a new law-book. Laws agreeing with CC are demonstrably old, those with H are based on an older source, laws peculiar to Deuteronomy are taken with some exceptions and some modifications from the older law-books or are accepted applications of established principles, or are the formulation of ancient customs in Deuteronomic phraseology. Such laws as are new in Deuteronomy are the development of Mosaic principles. The laws in their present form are not Mosaic, therefore the Mosaic nucleus was expanded and developed in various directions, as national life became more complex and religious ideas matured. All Hebrew laws are formulated under Moses' name, a fact that shows that there was a continuous Mosaic tradition embracing a moral, ceremonial, and civil element. It was the custom to identify the stream with the source and thus old laws and new ones are connected with the name of the original lawgiver." (Int. to Com. on DT. P.53ff)

Thus Deuteronomy connects with the legislative and historical sections of JE and with these the book is in harmony for the most part. The book also reflects the teachings of the earliest ~~written~~ prophecy. The prophets were cognizant of no break with the past and neither was Deuteronomy. On the contrary its connection with the past is implicit and explicit on most every page. In the religious background of Deuteronomy are Mosaic and prophetic principles, civil and ceremonial customs, codes with no validity in law. These the Deuteronomist in reaction against the syncretistic tendencies of the time made into law.

The final task of the thesis is to show the priestly-prophetic influence by reference to the book of Deuteronomy itself.

That the priestly influence was a large factor back of Deuteronomy is plain from a study of the book itself. In fact I am inclined to believe that it was larger than most people think . The evidences of this priestly influence are:

(1) The author shows a warm regard for the priests, a thing that the literary prophets had

been slow to do.

(a) He guards their privileges.DT. 18:1-8

(b) He demands obedience to their decisions (24:8 cf.also 17:10-12.)Here they are mentioned as members of the supreme court of justice at Jerusalem whose decision every Israelite is bound to respect and to whom he must give his obedience.

(c) These are the servants of Jehovah competent to bless inn his name.(Dt.10:8) They are the chosen of Jehovah and are to be well cared for. (18:5)

(d) The author commends them to the benevolence of the Israelites.(12:18,19)

(e) Dt. 17:18 shows either that the author himself was a priest or intends to trust his book of law to their custody.

(2) Furthermore,in Deuteronomy there is no attempt to abolish the ceremonial observances. "The stress is upon heart religion,but he is aware that external forms ,if properly observed may exercise and keep alive a religious spirit (14:23), may guard Israel's holiness from profanation and preserve it from contamination with heathen influences Driver. Dt. 11:8;14:1-21;22:5-12 are specifications

which would show this attitude.

(3) Furthermore it is a fact not without significance that the priests had a large part in the promulgation of the law. Kuenen thinks that Hilkiah knew about the book of the law and that its "accidental discovery" was a part of the priestly-prophetic program. We need not take Kuenen's view but we must hold that Hilkiah's willingness and apparent initiative in getting the book into the hands of the King together with the fact that the priests were a prominent factor in the promulgation of the law are facts not without some significance.

(4) Then too when we study the subsequent influence of the book understanding that ultimately it gave the priest great power and dealt a serious blow at prophecy, we are in a position to realize that priestly influence was at work in the book. The author may have been a priest touched by the prophetic principles, he may have been a prophet who had the interests of the priests also at heart, orthere may have been a joint authorship in which both the priest and the prophet had a part for it is a fact that the priestly element

is in the book.

(5) Deuteronomy also created a distinction between the priest and the laity. This may not have been consciously intended on the part of the author but it was an important byproduct. In the older times the fatherof the family offered up sacrifices for himself and his household and was in reality the priest of his house. Larger sanctuaries and professional priests were in existence but the people were not restricted to them. But now with the centralization of worship and all sacrifices to be made by the priest the distinction arose and became dominant and finally even prophecy had to abdicate in favour of priesthood.

And so for all of these reasons I am led to believe that the priestly influence was a strong element in the religious background of Deuteronomy.

That prophecy was a very strong element in the religious background of Deuteronomy is also perfectly clear from the study of the book. In fact prophecy is conceded the dominant place.

(1) Deuteronomy itself gives a large

place to the prophet and seeks to define his position with regard to the people. They are to be men who are like unto Moses(18:15) as mediators of Jehovah's will. They are also to take the place of the heathen diviner and soothsayer. The Canaanites hearkened to the voice of the soothsayer and the diviner but the Israelites are to hearken to the voice of the prophet. The references in this connection are not to individual prophets but to the prophetic order and the existence of such an order in Israel was a special mark of Israel's separation from the other nations of antiquity. In 18:19-20 a higher value is set on the prophetic office. He is to be obeyed by everyone who hears him. If he abuses his office,however, he is to be put to death. In DT.13:1-4 we have a stillhigher value put upon the prophet and a higher conception of what a prophet is than anything that we have elsewhere in the book. According to this passage a man may possess all the earmarks of a prophet such as sign and wonders but he is not to be followed even then,if he entices men away from the service of Jehovah. The moral element is to surpass the apparently miraculous . Jehovah is to be the sole

object of Israel's reverence no matter what the false prophet does and no matter who he is. The prophet is to be a bulwark against heathenism and one who will defend the cause of Jehovah. In Deuteronomy there is the recognition of the fact that the prophet and the soothsayer are alike in some points while they are widely different in others. This is surely a clear insight for, " The Israelitic prophets belonged to the same general class of persons as the heathen seers and ecstatics. But when we come to the content of their oracles as compared with the oracles of their heathen analogues we find at once a world-wide difference". (Beacon Lights of Prophecy, Knudson P.36f) Deuteronomy recognizes that the two are at opposite poles (18:9-18) and Isa. 2:6 and 8:19 are at one with Deuteronomy in this estimate. The prophet is eulogized in Deuteronomy and in that we see traces of Prophetic influence in the book.

(2) Deuteronomy and the prophets are at one in teaching the moral demands of Jehovah. The prophets had claimed one after another that civil and social justice were paramount in the eyes of Jehovah.

(AMos 4:1-3 ;5:12ff;Hosea 4:1-3 Isa. 1:16f;Micah 3:1-4) And so in Deuteronomy much of the legislation from chapter 12 to 26 is in the interest of social and civil justice. God is a god who is righteous and a hater of sin (25:5;23:19;24:4;and 25:16) where commercial injustice and other immoral practices are condemned.

(3) Deuteronomy and the prophets agree also that Israel is a Holy nation, but that she is not to be apostate. This is a striking and fundamental likeness which shows the prophetic influence in Deuteronomy. Isaiah had affirmed Israel's vocation as a holy nation and Hosea traced the fall of the northern Kingdom to the abandonemt of Jehovah.. These principles became operative in Deuteronomy and in order to keep the nation from apostasy to Jehovah we have the Deuteronomic lawbook and the Deuteronomic reform. We wonder at the radical anti-foreign feeling that we find in Deuteronomy ,an anti-foreign feeling that will brook no foreign King(17:15) and we find an answer in the fear which they had that a foreign King would bring in heathenish rites. Perhaps they remembered the wives of Solomon and the Tyrian Jezebel. We wonder at the injunctions to exterminate the Canaanites.

It seems to be a rather inhuman statement in the midst of legislation that is otherwise rather humane. But this does not seem so inhuman when we reflect that the Canaanites ,at the time when Deuteronomy was written, had no objective existence. This advice had an ideal value and was given to warn the people to beware of apostasy from Jehovah. These advices to exterminate the Canaanites bear witness to the fact that the author of Deuteronomy is speaking with great earnestness. Nothing heathenish was to be tolerated and those who seduced men from the worship of Jehovah were to be ruthlessly put out of the way. Humanity was to be sacrificed to religion; the encroachments of heathenism and apostasy -the sin of the age- were to be fearlessly resisted. It was believed by the faithful that the popular religion was Canaanitish in origin, therefore everything Canaanitish was to go—even the Canaanites.

Deuteronomy also shows the influence of the prophets in the idea of God as a God of love. Of all the prophets Hosea comes the nearest to being the spiritual father of the Deuteronomist . Not only do they agree in repudiating nature-worship, in the place which they assign to the emotional, but

also in regarding God as a god of love. "The truth of love is equally set forth in Deuteronomy and in the Deuteronomist's great spiritual predecessor , Hosea. The primal love of God to Israel falls in the foreground of each written discourse. All human relations within the Israelitish community are rooted in this".(Cheyne "Jer. His Life and His Time" P.66) See Hos. 3:1;9:15;11:1-4;14:5;4:1;6:4,6;12:7 cf. Dt. 7:8;23:6;8:2,3;8:5. The influence of Hosea is one of the most marked influences that are back of Deuteronomy. And nowhere is this shown to better advantage than in the item of love. Jehovah loves Israel with a moral love and they are to love Him. Love manifests itself in serving Him and in the human and just treatment of their fellowmen. That is the message of both the prophet and of the Deuteronomist.

(5) The monotheistic teaching of Deuteronomy is another of the things that the prophets taught. If any difference, monotheism is taught more clearly by Deuteronomy than it is by the earlier writers. " Hear,oh Israel, Jehovah,our God is one God. Jehovah He is God,there is none else beside Him" are expressions of this monotheism. The natural corollary of this belief in monotheism is that Jehovah is

to be the exclusive object of the Israelites' reverence and in this do we find the main cause for the centralization of the worship at Jerusalem. The local sanctuaries were often the centres of impure and unspiritual rites and this made for centralization. Bu t perhaps the main reason for the centralization was that the single sanctuary would make for monotheism. Worship in different places would tend to generate different conceptions of the God worshipped and might even lead to the syncretistic confusion of Jehovah with the other deities. The concentration of worship in one placeseemed therefore necessary to purify the popular conception of God. The only remedy for the polytheism of the people was the restriction to a single sanctuary. The Deuteronomist did not want to abolish the ritual of the local sanctuaries but he did want to regulate it. At a single sanctuary this could be done far more easily. By centralizing worship the heathen accretions could best be rid from the worship of Jehovah. And by centralization monotheism could best be guaranteed. The prophets had stood for monotheism and the purification of the ritual. They had not argued so much, if at all, for the centralization of worship. The Deuteronomist went further.

He believed in monotheism and purity of ritual, as the prophets had believed before him but he had an additional insight. He saw that these could not be guaranteed without centralization of worship and objective law in the place of principle. As the result of this insight we have the book of Deuteronomy. The prophets had given the principles but they did not seem to work the change. There was needed a visible tangible law that would put these principles into force and stop the tendencies away from the spiritual worship of Jehovah towards the rites of paganism.

In the religious background of Deuteronomy we have found the priest and certainly the prophet. Over against these we have found the syncretistic tendencies of the great mass of the Hebrews with their popular religion. It is the interaction of these forces that is the most significant thing in the religious background of this book. And it is the reaction of the priestly-prophetic party against the syncretistic tendencies of the time that gives to the world the great book of Deuteronomy with its splendid monotheism, its wonderful human interest, its emphasis on the love of God, its stress on ethical principles, and its rich interpretation of history.