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THE BACKGROUND OF SAINT PAUL'S WORK.

Being a Thesis submitted by

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- (b) The term 'Mystery'
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 - (a) Eleusinian
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(f) Influence of Mystery Religions on St. Paul.

St. Paul was the Apostle of the Gentile world. To him was committed the gospel of the uncircumcision as to St. Peter was committed the gospel of the circumcision. (Gal. 2:7.). This deliniation of their respective spheres must not be closely pressed, as if we were to understand that St. Paul was debarred from evangelizing Jews and St. Peter from evangelizing Gentiles. St. Peter it was, indeed, who first baptised the Gentile Cornelius; and in all his missionary journeys St. Paul went first to the Jewish Synagogues in the towns he visited around the Roman world. The deliniation must be understood as marking in a more general sense St. Paul's special call to minister to the Gentile world, and cannot exclude the Jewish element from the background of St. Paul's work. All the facts of his history testify to this. Both in his training and in his missionary career the Jewish element is one of the most important.

St. Paul himself was a Jew of unmixed Jewish ancestry, trained in the conservative school of the Pharisees, a pupil of the revered Gamaliel, perhaps himself a member of the great council of the Jews, Sanhedrin. So powerful was the sway of his ancestry, and early training that for years he took a leading part in, and was the bitterest antagonist of the new sect of the Nazarenes. To this must be added the following facts. First that when he was converted, the Scriptures to which he appealed were exclusively the Jewish Scriptures: further, that the Messiah he proclaimed was the Jewish Messiah, who though born to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, had rigidly confined Himself to the lost sheep of the house

you had taken the first steps in the conquest of the whole world. Now St. Paul was a Roman citizen, Rome and all Rome stood for loomed large in his mind. How much is implied in, "after that I must see Rome also." It is not too much to say that St. Paul's missionary policy was first to evangelize the circumference of the Empire, and then to work gradually in to the centre- Rome itself. In working out that plan he had the protection of his Roman citizenship, he had the advantage of Roman roads and means of transport, in the Orient the connivance at least of work was, so Ramsay thinks, quite in accord with that of the Educational policy of the Mistress of the World.

Further it will be possible to show that that it was not only to the protection of Roman law, and the safe transport of Roman roads to which St. Paul was a debtor, but in formulating his conception of the organization of the church, and in some cases of the truths of the Gospel, Roman methods contributed, we shall not say to the contents, but we shall certainly claim, to the form of his thought.

In describing the background of St. Paul's work, then, a long chapter must be given to the influence of his Roman environment, since Rome thus contributed largely to the success of his Christian mission.

The forces of Romanism and Judaism in St. Paul's day were in many ways antagonistic, and between those opposing forces stood a third, viz. Greek culture, or Hellenism. The Greeks were no longer a political power or a nationality like the Jews and the Romans. They had conquered the world by their language and literature, their art and their philosophy. Their very masters, the Romans, proved ready disciples, and the

resulting Graeco-Roman civilization was the great unifying force which went hand in hand with the conquering legions. The East had been in the process of being Hellenized since the Macedonian conquests. Rome came in to put her seal on the process and to give it the necessary stability. Thus Greek became the recognized language of culture and of commerce, and in the form of the "koine", the language of everyday life and correspondence around the Roman world. Thus Hellenism became the Mediator between the Jews and the Romans. It prepared Gentile minds for the religious ideas of the Jews, it softened among the Jews of the dispersion, Jewish fanaticism. The Jews of the Dispersion read their Scriptures in a Greek translation. Their Hebrew brethren in Palestine retained a variety of their ancient tongue and their inherited views, while, those of the Dispersion had yielded to the subtle influence of a more cosmopolitan influence and a broader education, and were known as Hellenists. Hellenism was thus fitted to do almost as large a work, if not a larger work than Rome in educating the world for Christianity. It had provided a common language, a common culture, and a common intellectual atmosphere. Greek criticism and philosophy had done much to undermine the old pagan beliefs and religions. The elementary principles of "Natural religions" had been thought out - the spirituality of the divine nature - the unity and beneficence of God - the brotherhood of man. But that was all, and religious minds were now athirst for some positive revelation. This the apostles were commissioned to give, and finding ready to hand their first principles, they made them their starting point. Among the apostles St. Paul was a chosen vessel, especially qualified to fulfill this very function. Born and bred in Tarsus, a centre of Greek culture, possessed of a University,