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THE JEWISH BACKGROUND OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

I

THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND

SINCE an understanding of any political situation necessitates a comprehension of the historical phenomena which produced it, a very brief sketch of Jewish history in the six centuries preceding the Christian era is in place.

In 586 B.C. the Kingdom of Judah lost its independence to Nebuchadnezzar. In conformity with the policy originated by Assyria, the Babylonian transported the defeated population to his homeland, where it came under the domination of Persia when Cyrus the Persian overthrew the Babylonian Empire in 539. In 536 the comparative leniency of Persian rule allowed the return of a part of the nation to Judaea under Zerubbabel, who set about rebuilding the temple soon after this return. But since the bulk of Jewry remained in Babylonia, to become a citadel of Judaism rivalling Palestine itself, the new Judaea was comparable with the pre-exilic nation neither in extent, nor in importance. In 332 the Palestinian Jews submitted to Alexander the Great, but with the partition of his far-flung empire, Palestine in the year 320 came under the aegis of the Egyptian Ptolemies. As repeatedly in both earlier and later history, Palestine suffered because of its strategic central position between Egypt and Syria, between the Mediterranean Sea and Mesopotamia. In this period it became enmeshed in the struggle for supremacy between the Ptolemies and the Syrian Seleucids, and following a century and a quarter of Egyptian control, it was subjugated by Antiochus the Great in 198.

It was early in the second century B.C. that the Jewish sacerdotal aristocracy became imbued with the spirit of Hellenism, that hybrid flower sprung from the seeds of Greek culture implanted by Alexander in the soil of the Orient. During this period two groups within Judaism are apparent: the orthodox, wishing to live its religious and cultural life in isolation from the political world of the Gentiles; and the nationalistic, ambitious that a Jewish nation should become an important unit in a great

Hellenic empire even at the price of casting aside the Torah and adopting Greek customs. The former group favoured the comparatively mild sovereignty of the Ptolemies, while the latter believed the future of a politically ambitious Jewry lay with the Seleucids. It was a choice between the spiritual and the material, between separation from or identification with that political world of the Gentiles where might made right. As so frequently in earlier and later times of crisis, the nation suffered because its leaders chose the worldly path, in spite of the tradition in its Scriptures that the road to national exaltation lay only through the avenues of the spirit.

When Antiochus IV Epiphanes ascended the throne of Syria in 175 B.C. those elements within Judaism which cherished political aspirations looked to him for leadership, and he mistakenly supposed them to represent the majority of the nation. The process of secularization began with the appointment of a Hellenophile high priest who introduced Greek customs into Jerusalem and sought to crush all that was Jewish. Antiochus relentlessly persecuted the Hasidim—the Jews remaining loyal to their tradition,—legalized Greek idolatry, forbade the observance of Jewish religious rites, and climaxed his folly by plundering the Temple, desecrating the very Holy of Holies, and finally devoting the building to the Olympian Zeus. To this sacrilege the revolt of the Maccabees made answer. Three years to the day after its desecration by Antiochus, Judas Maccabaeus cleansed and rededicated the Temple, an achievement made easier by the death of Antiochus that same year, 164. The Jewish victory, however, was by no means won, and in the year 161 Judas made an alliance with Rome, repeating, for the sake of security against Syria, the mistake made by earlier Jewish leaders. Foreign entanglements inevitably proved the first step toward national disaster. In 142 Simon Maccabaeus secured independence from Syria and until 63 the Asmonaeon dynasty controlled the destinies of Palestine, while personal ambition quenched the fiery nationalism which had defied Antiochus Epiphanes, and a pro-Greek spirit damped the religious ardour that had once driven the gods of Hellas from the confines of Judaism. The descendants of the Maccabees were attempting to serve two masters, Mosaism and Hellenism.

The development of the tiny province of Judaea into the "Land of Israel", a Jewish Palestine, was the work of three of

the Maccabees—John Hyrcanus, Judas Aristobulus, and Alexander Jannaeus. Their conquests were accompanied by the forcible conversion of the inhabitants to Judaism, and the extermination of those who resisted. Like the Hohenzollerns, it was the boast of each Maccabean king to have added to his territorial inheritance, until this expansion came to an end in the reign of Queen Shelom-Zion (Alexandra), from 76 to 69. A foreshadow of the final disaster was a quarrel between the two sons of Alexander Jannaeus, to which the Roman Pompey became a party. In 63 the triumvir took Jerusalem with great slaughter and proceeded to strip Judaea of all the Maccabean additions, leaving to Hyrcanus a mere remnant of territory and the high priestly office. For the next twenty-six years the nation was wasted in warfare instigated by the Maccabees, struggling desperately for their sovereignty, until out of this period of confusion arose Herod, son of Antipater the Edomite, both father and son creatures of Rome. In the final duel between Herod and Mattathias Antigonus, last of the Asmonaeans, the Jewish Edomite king had the aid of Rome, while the Jewish Maccabean king was supported by Parthia. In 37 B.C. Jerusalem was again taken by the Romans, its population, men, women and children, put to the sword in a merciless slaughter, and Herod was without a rival. To crown his victory, Herod in time destroyed every member of the Asmonaeon family. Since the internecine struggle after the death of Queen Shelom-Zion had cost a hundred thousand Jewish lives, and those the finest of the nation, even the possibility of further revolt disappeared. However, embers of nationalistic and religious zeal still smouldered in the souls of individual fanatics, bitterly hostile toward Rome, but planless and leaderless.

The reign of Herod marked one of the darkest periods of Jewish history. His popular appellation, "*The Edomite slave*", reflects the vassalage of his relation to Rome, while toward his Jewish subjects Herod exhibited that ferocious tyranny which made his name a byword. Although he rebuilt the Temple on a magnificent scale, his people, not without reason, attributed that gift to his flair for ostentatious architecture rather than to any zeal for Judaism. The Sanhedrin was shorn of its authority except in trifling religious matters, while the high priests were changed for the most frivolous reasons. Judaea was drained of its wealth that Herod might build great show-places among

the heathen. He depended on foreign mercenary troops, while his chief officials were Greeks. Consequently his subjects detested him not only for his cruelty but also for the Hellenistic tendencies which marked him a traitor to Jewish tradition.

At the death of Herod in 4 B.C. the kingdom was divided among three sons—to Archelaus going Judaea, Idumea and Samaria, with the title of ethnarch; to Herod Antipas, Galilee and Perea; while Philip was given the region east and north-east of Galilee. To the two younger was awarded the rank of tetrarch. At the very outset of Archelaus' reign began the Great Rebellion initiated by a delegation of Jewish elders to Augustus, imploring him to put an end to the Herodian kingdom and rather govern Palestine through the Procurator of Syria. But not until ten tedious years had seen Archelaus follow in the blood-stained footsteps of his father, did another complaint to Augustus, made jointly by Jews and Samaritans, result in his exile to Gaul, and the incorporation of Palestine with Syria under a Roman procurator.

But the type of government which the Jews had envisaged—an autonomous state under the headship of the high priest and only nominally subject to Syria—was not to be. Ere long Palestine was given its own Roman procurator, residing in Caesarea and coming to Jerusalem for the three great feasts, when the city was crowded with pilgrims and revolt was most likely to break out. The high priests were divested of any real power; their very robes were in the care of the Roman officer commanding the Fort of Antonia, and were entrusted to the priests only for the Day of Atonement and the three great festivals. What a fitting symbol this humiliation was of the low state to which the national fortunes had sunk!

The political phenomena of Jewish national life necessarily affected the structure of the Jewish state. We shall now consider the latter as it appeared in the second half of the first century B.C. and the early years of the Christian era. Officially recognized by the Roman government as the head of the Jewish nation was the Patriarch, who through delegates still maintained control of the communities in the Diaspora. However, this authority was primarily in the realm of religion. The civil head of the Jews of the Parthian Empire (Babylonia, Mesopotamia, etc.) was the "Rosh Galutha"—chief of the exile. The primary tasks of the delegates included the collection of taxes for the support of the

patriarch, the publication of the calendar, and the delivery of the patriarchal circular letters, which, no doubt, preserved uniformity of custom between the Diaspora and Palestine.

Judicial power was vested in the Sanhedrin. The name is a Hebrew-Aramaic modification of the Greek word "synedrion", meaning "a body of men assembled in council". There were five Sanhedrist courts, consisting of three, five, seven, twenty-three, and seventy-one members respectively. The court of twenty-three judges had power to pass a death sentence, but appeal to the higher court was possible. The Supreme Court had jurisdiction in tribal affairs and cases involving false prophets and high priests. It had also the exclusive right to declare war. The Sanhedrin was recognized by the Romans as a court with authority to pass the death sentence, subject to confirmation by the Roman government, which alone could execute. The procedure of the Sanhedrin was prescribed in most exact detail. Witnesses appearing against a person on trial for his life answered seven questions: "To what year did their charge refer? What month? Day of the month? Day of the week? Hour of the day? To what place? What was the nature of the offence?" If witnesses, who were separately examined and cross-examined, disagreed on any of these, their testimony was invalidated. A majority of two of the twenty-three judges was necessary for conviction, and a majority of one for acquittal. If a witness appeared in favour of the accused after trial, before the penalty was exacted, a retrial was granted. No sentence could be executed on the day of the trial, on Friday afternoon, on the Sabbath, or on a feast day. One wonders whether the condemnation of Jesus recorded in Matthew xxvi. 66 and in Mark xiv. 54, as "*worthy of death*" was the verdict of an orderly trial of the Sanhedrin in accordance with these prescribed regulations, or a farcical trial. It would seem impossible to consider the procedure recorded in the New Testament as a legal trial, since in the case of Christ most of the rules were honoured in the breach rather than in the observance. Professor Klausner in his book, *Jesus of Nazareth*,¹ regards the trial as only a preliminary one, but for this view there is no conclusive evidence. There is general agreement that the Sanhedrin lost much of its authority early in the Christian era. According to John xviii. 31 the Jews had no power even then to carry out

¹ p. 371.

a death sentence. "Pilate therefore said unto them, Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law. The Jews said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." It is interesting to notice that the Gospels are not alone in presenting the high priests as men without principle. Josephus, himself of the high priestly family, also speaks of their violence and greed (*Ant.* xx. 9, 4). A street ballad quoted in the Talmud reflects the popular indignation against the high priests :

Woe is me, for the house of Boethus : woe is me, for their club !

Woe is me, for the house of Annas : woe is me, for their whisperings !

Woe is me, for the house of Kathros (Kantharas) : woe is me, for their pen !

Woe is me, for the house of Ishmael (ben Phibi) : woe is me, for their fist !¹

To the judicial and administrative corruption was added the burden of economic oppression. During the time of Herod the unbearable taxes reduced the population to poverty and embittered it against the despotic Roman Imperium.

The survey of the political situation in the six centuries preceding the advent of Christianity reveals some of the darkest pages in the history of the Jewish nation. The civil and military authorities of Jewry were helpless in grappling with political situations, each one more perplexing than the last. While some held that the only hope of betterment lay in military force through rebellion, others realized that mere human effort was futile and placed their hope in divine intervention through the advent of the King-Messiah who would destroy the kingdom of iniquity and establish a government of righteousness. In a fitting time, when the nation was humbled beneath the Roman yoke, Jesus of Nazareth came forward with a plan of redemption diametrically opposed to any imitation of the methods of Gentile militarism.

II

THE RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

As an expression of gratitude that the Kingdom of Judah had escaped the Scythian invasion and moved by the warnings of the code but newly discovered in the Temple, Josiah commenced in 621 a thorough restoration of the sanctuary and a purification of the religious life of the people along the lines dictated by this document—the Pentateuch. The acceptance of this code was of great significance, since it doubtless contributed

¹ *Pesahim* 57a ; T. Menahoth xiii. 21, quoted by Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 337.

toward the formation and recognition of an authoritative canon of Scripture, destined to become the basis of Israel's social and spiritual life. Divine worship was held in both the temple and the synagogue, which likewise served as a meeting-place for religious discussion and instruction in the law. The origin of the synagogue is commonly ascribed to the period of the exile and to Ezra, who is thought to have developed and solidified this institution, but it appears from Psalm lxxiv. that the synagogue had already existed when the temple stood. Josephus and Philo, as well as some later Jewish scholars, believe that the origin of the synagogue may go back to Moses. Its government, as may be seen from the following, served as a pattern for the early church.

1. The archisynagogos (Rosh ha-keneset), or chief, supervised the worship, controlled the positions of the leader of praise and the steward and was responsible for order.

2. The archontes, or elders, constituted the ecclesiastical authority in religious and civil matters with power to suspend or excommunicate from the synagogue and to sentence to flogging (thirty-nine stripes was the maximum).

3. The prefect, or ruler, was a civil official representing the government.

4. The deacons cared for the poor.

5. The hazzan, a paid official, was the leader in prayer and reading of the law. He also had charge of the property, particularly the rolls of the Scriptures.

6. The steward, also a paid official, supervised the interior management.

During the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (283-246 B.C.) the Pentateuch, and, a century or two later, the remaining Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, forming what is known as the Septuagint. Since the greater number of Jews living in Egypt no longer read or understood Hebrew, such a translation supplied an imperative need. In common with other oriental races the Jews were profoundly influenced by the Hellenistic civilization which swept over the Near East after the conquest of Alexander. However, this amalgam of Greek culture, modified by the spirit of the Orient, contributed no spiritual uplift to the Jews within its influence, but rather alienated them from the religion of the Old Testament. Furthermore, as is abundantly evidenced in secular literature, the

Hellenistic culture provided no antitoxin for moral degeneration. Even to Aristotle, not moral action but rather ecstatic contemplation of the Absolute represented the supreme state of man. But according to the divine revelation of both the Old and New Testaments genuine religion expresses itself not in mysticism but in the harmony of man's will with God's will in practical everyday life. We know little of Hellenistic Judaism, except that for a century or two it flourished, to be defeated by the traditional Judaism of the schools of Palestine and Babylonia. In its heyday Hellenism was a contributing factor in the decline of the spiritual power of the temple. So low did the spiritual quality of the priesthood sink that the office of the high priest was bought and sold. The high priest Jason actually sent contributions for sacrifices to Hercules, while the political power of the priests was even greater than in the days of David—they were the virtual rulers of the people.

Wilhelm Bousset thus characterizes the sacerdotal class :

The piety among the leading classes gradually took on a thoroughly external character. The cult controlled by this priesthood assumed an artificial character. It was something devised with exaggerated refinement and had little of originality and substance developed spontaneously from the national life of the people. It is dominated by scholarly investigation and bears the impress of a barren formalism. Even small details are executed with great solemnity, as though they were affairs of state. We may assume that this formalism must have entirely choked the customary piety of the Jewish priests or reduced it to a very low level. What appears on the surface is a thoroughly sterile piety. It is not surprising that at the end of this epoch (pre-Maccabean time) it was exactly into the ruling sacerdotal aristocracy that a thorough-going secularization and moral degradation entered, and that exactly here was the centre of all radical hellenizing activities. One is forced to notice the parallel of the catholic clergy of the Renaissance.¹

The Maccabean revolt (166 B.C.) marked the ascendancy of a separate class, the scribes, to greater spiritual power. With the spiritual decadence of the priesthood the rising power of the scribes saved Judaism from complete disintegration. The Patriarch Judah (first century A.D.) succeeded in consolidating Judaism by his Mishnah, a code of rabbinical laws comprising sixty-three tractates and serving as a textbook for the study of the Oral Law, also ascribed to Moses. The purpose of it was to enable the pious Jew to keep the Written or Biblical Law. The assertion of some scholars that the Mishnah inevitably created formalism and killed the spirit is too severe a criticism.

¹ *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter*, pp. 100-1.

Assuredly the spirit was far from being dead in a people who were willing to die for the Law and the Holy One of Israel. Shortly after the crucifixion (A.D. 39-40), when Caius Caligula wanted to place an image in the Temple, the Jews in great masses went to the plain of Acre and there prostrated themselves before Legatus Petronius and his army, beseeching him rather to kill them all off than to desecrate the Temple. Forsaking their fields in the seed-time and thus incurring the horrors of famine, they even followed him to Tiberias, remaining there for forty or fifty days in the open. Declaring to Petronius, "Better for us to die than to transgress our Law," they threw themselves to the ground and bared their necks, ready to give their lives.

The great achievement of traditional Judaism consisted in successfully establishing uniformity of custom and observance. In the period between the last prophets and the end of the age of the Tannaim (beginning of the third century A.D.) Judaism made great progress in adding to its wealth of teaching the prophetic doctrine of repentance. As sin and retribution are individual, individual repentance as taught by Ezekiel was emphasized. The prophetic element in the Law also received fresh emphasis. This is readily understood since the prophetic warnings of judgment to come had been realized when the nation lost its independence and its people were scattered.

Two trends were distinguishable in Jewish religious life: (1) that of the conservative, non-political Pharisees, who upheld the traditions of Judaism; (2) that of the aristocratic politically-minded Sadducees, to whom the leading priestly families belonged.

The word "Pharisee" is derived from the Hebrew "parush", meaning "separatist". Neither the etymology of the word nor tradition throws light on the nature of the separation. According to Professor Louis Ginsburg the word is used in Tannaite and Amoraic literature as an antonym to "Am-ha-Arez", meaning one who is ignorant and remiss in observing religious laws and customs. The Pharisees trod in the footsteps of the scribes with a philosophy of life based on a strict observance of Old Testament doctrine as interpreted by rabbinic tradition. They were extremely nationalistic, contending that God's only concern was the glorification of Judaism, to be consummated in the advent of the Messiah, who would bring the entire world to their faith. They also believed in the existence of spirits, angels, Satan, and resurrection. Comparatively little is known

of the origin of this party which was in existence in the latter half of the second century B.C. but saw its most active days during the first century A.D. According to Plutarch, Tacitus, Senneca, Cassius, Josephus, as well as the New Testament, the Pharisees carried on a highly organized and extensive missionary work, which had disappeared by the end of the first century A.D. Since the idea of conversion of the Gentiles had always been inherent in the Messianic doctrine, the Pharisees developed a definite ritual for their entry into the Jewish fold. This included three steps :

1. Circumcision, which admitted the convert into the family of Abraham in the national and covenantal sense ;
2. Baptism as a sign of washing away of Gentile uncleanness ;
3. The offering of a sacrifice, symbolizing the confession of personal sin and acceptance of the Levitical code.

The Pharisees considered themselves set apart for the study of the Law, which they interpreted traditionally in its minutiae. As a result of this intensive study, the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds and many other commentaries to the Scriptures came into existence. An example of this exaggerated devotion of the Law is the Talmudic record of a dispute whether an egg laid by a hen on the Sabbath should be eaten. Although there is comparatively little in the Old Testament on the keeping of the Sabbath and the nice distinctions between the clean and the unclean, rabbinical literature boasts a veritable labyrinth of detail on the subject. In fairness it must be admitted that there are mitigating circumstances for these seeming trivialities : (1) the danger to Judaism from the heathen idolatry surrounding the nation ; (2) the possibility that Jews in contact with heathenism might not be able to observe the Levitical purification laws. So obnoxious to the Jews was the paganism around them that they were determined to throw about the Law an impregnable defence against infiltration of foreign elements. Jews were forbidden to enter into business transactions or in any way to associate with Gentiles three days before the heathen festivals, and, according to Rabbi Ishmael, also three days after. Forbidden also were lending, borrowing, receiving, and paying where Gentiles were concerned. On heathen festival days no Jew was so much as to show himself on the street.

There were two schools of Pharisaic thought, following the cleavage between the disciples of Shammai and those of Hillel. The former were strict and extreme in their demands, while the latter were more tolerant and broadminded, as is evident from the pronouncement of Gamaliel, the son or grandson of Hillel, recorded in Acts v. 35-39, the last two verses of which read :

And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone ; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown :

But if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them ; lest haply ye be found even to be fighting against God.

But here the question arises about the persecution of the Christians by Paul, Gamaliel's pupil. Lacking conclusive evidence that Paul was a Hillelite, we may assume that on the issue of the correct attitude to Jewish Christians there was, perhaps, no uniformity of opinion even in the liberal school. The Talmud often mentions seven classes of Pharisees, of which but two are approved : those whose motives lie in the love of God, and those who act out of fear of God. Of the remaining five classes, both the sincerity and motives are doubted.¹ Against such the scorn of Jesus was directed (Matt. vi. 16 ; xii. 34).

When Christ charged the Pharisees with hypocrisy He intended to indict them not for conscious purposeful deceit, but rather for inconsistency between their profession of piety and their practice, arising from both superficial moral standards and erroneous moral values. But among the Pharisees were also numbered some lofty characters, such as Hillel, Gamaliel, Jochanan ben Zakkai, and Gamaliel the second. A number of them were believers (Acts xv. 5), and one Pharisee, Simon, even invited Jesus for a meal (Luke vii. 36), while the illustrious Gamaliel went so far as to defend the apostles against the priests (Acts v. 38).

In the time of Hyrcanus and Alexandra (first century B.C.) there was evident a division of thought on the Messianic hope. The followers of the Maccabees, who wished the Jewish nation to become a political power and to play a secular role on the stage of Gentile history, were not averse to the idea that the Maccabean age was ushering in the Messianic Kingdom, and they dreamed of a Messiah possessed of earthly power. Contrary to Old Testament prophecy, the tribe of Levi, to which the priests

¹ cf. Kohler, *The Origin of the Synagogue*, p. 112.

and Maccabees belonged, began to outshine in glory the tribe of Judah, in which the Messianic expectations were centred, and there was no thought of a Messiah of the house of David. But the pious in the land, the Pharisees, who preferred to have Israel, as a spiritual nation, follow a solitary path from the struggling heathen nations round about them, were disillusioned with the Maccabees and their grandiose scheme and even considered them usurpers of the throne. Since Jerusalem had been conquered by the Romans and little could be expected from the Asmonaeans, who were strongly influenced by the Sadducees, the Pharisees as is evident from the Psalms of Solomon (*c.* 45 B.C.), turned their thoughts to the numerous Old Testament predictions of a Messiah who would be the son of David. With this hope of a Messiah were associated the following expectations:¹

1. Elijah will lead the people to repentance ;
2. The Messiah will crush the forces of wickedness and idolatry, purging the Temple and the Holy Land ;
3. His purpose will be to redeem Israel from her foreign yoke and to convert the Gentile nations to a knowledge of the true God.

Who were the Sadducees ? Although they accepted the canonicity of the prophets, they, in common with most other Jews, stressed the Pentateuch to the point of minimizing the prophets. At first not averse to traditional teaching, the Sadducees later rejected the Oral Law as elaborated and interpreted by the Pharisees.² The Sadducees had no following among the working classes. While the Pharisees cherished the hope of a Messianic Kingdom, or at least a life of bliss after death, the Sadducees envisaged no such attractive future. Since to them the current order of things was acceptable, they felt no need for a Messiah. In self-righteousness they exceeded the Pharisees, who prided themselves on doing the will of God, while the Sadducees believed they could act rightly on their own accord. They disappeared from the scene of Jewish history as a party with the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

A review of the religious condition of the Jews at the time of Christ reveals that the life of the Temple had sunk to an impotent formalism. The incumbent of the high priestly office

¹ cf. San. 91b ; Ber. 34b.

² cf. Josephus, Ant. xiii. 10, 6, §297 ff.

was scarcely a shadow of the Aaronic type. The spirit of Moses and the prophets found no voice among the hierarchy. At this time Jesus of Nazareth came not only to revitalize the prophetic message by His teaching but to fulfil it by His death and resurrection, thus proving Himself to be the Messiah.

A scholarly rabbi is said to have remarked to a group of Christians: "Your Lord did not take the holy of rabbinical literature but the Holy of Holies." One cannot fail to recognize, especially in the first three Gospels, the air of the Old Testament. The ministry of Jesus was Jewish. He lived as a Jew and spoke as a Jew to Jews, indicating on more than one occasion that His message was primarily for Jews rather than for Gentiles, and furthermore, that He did not come "to destroy the law and the prophets". Consequently, Jesus cannot be considered the founder of a new religion, as is often erroneously held. On the contrary, He confirmed the Law and the Prophets. His message is centred in the God of Moses and the prophets. Christianity is not an offshoot of the Mosaic religion, and neither is it a borrower from this religion. Rather is it the full blossoming of the flower potentially stored up in its seed—the Hebrew Scriptures.

In conclusion it may be said that the political and religious condition of the Jews created the need for the coming of Christ. "When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law" (Gal. iv. 4).

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