

divine revelation—all the others were of course. They have always been slaves to tradition and during all their career, with the exception of about 200 years, if we may believe their own records, they have been dependant on some other country. The only conscience they ever had, as a people, was a ceremonial conscience. They were always very particular about the ceremonies of their baneful religion, but the Gentiles never had any rights which they were bound to respect, except when they were obliged to. The time given for the birth of Jesus was the brightest era of the Roman Empire. The Jews were the most complex problem they had to deal with. Other people could live peacefully with the conquerors when they were conquered, but the Jews could not. Wherever there were Roman armies, there were, of course, Roman rites and ceremonies. Other people could stand this without any conscientious difficulties, as long as they were allowed to practice their own religion, which the Romans, as wise rulers, of course, never interfered with. To practice any other religion but Judaism in Jerusalem could not of course be tolerated by the Jewish priests and a standing army was always necessary to keep them in order. Like every other religion, of course, there had many additions been made from time to time to the ceremonies of the Jewish religion; various new schemes of raising a revenue were of course devised by the Jewish priests from time to time and though the ceremonial law was supposed to have been completed a long time before, the vast majority of the population had only a very vague idea of what was written in their own books. It was very natural for the Romans to try some method of undermining the authority of the Jewish priests. The books of that time being all written by hand there was no possible guarantee that any two copies of the law would be absolutely alike. Even under a modern system of writing in Roman characters a good scribe could not write out more than about two sets of the Hebrew scriptures in a year and do it right. It would be very easy therefore for a man trained in philosophy, logic and history as Jesus evidently had been, with a good knowledge of the various editions of the Hebrew scriptures to confound the priests and the scribes by the Socratic method of asking questions. Jesus himself did not like to answer the questions of strangers off hand. When he did answer, it was in such a way that the