

The Sadducees are not spoken of at all in the fourth Gospel, where the Pharisees are frequently mentioned (John vii, 32, 45; xi, 47, 57; xviii, 3; viii, 3, 13-19; ix, 13); an omission which, as Geiger suggests, is not unimportant in reference to the criticism of the Gospels (*ut sup.* p. 107). Moreover, while Paul had been a Pharisee and was the son of a Pharisee, while Josephus was a Pharisee, and the Mishna was a Pharisaical digest of Pharisaical opinions and practices, not a single undoubted writing of an acknowledged Sadducee has come down to us, so that for an acquaintance with their opinions we are mainly dependent on their antagonists. This point should always be borne in mind in judging their opinions and forming an estimate of their character, and its full bearing will be duly appreciated by those who reflect that even at the present day, with all the checks against misrepresentation arising from publicity and the invention of printing, probably no religious or political party in any country would be content to accept the statements of an opponent as giving a correct view of its opinions.

III. *The Tenets and Practices of the Sadducees.*—To apprehend duly the doctrines and usages of this sect, it must be borne in mind that the Sadducees were the aristocratic and conservative priestly party, who clung to their ancient prerogatives and resisted every innovation which the ever-shifting circumstances of the commonwealth demanded; while their opponents, the Pharisees, were the liberals, the representatives of the people—their principle being so to develop and modify the Mosaic law as to adapt it to the requirements of the time, and to make the people at large realize that they were “a people of priests, a holy nation.” Thus, standing immovably upon the ancient basis, the Sadducees, whose differences were at first chiefly political, afterwards extended these differences to doctrinal, legal, and ritual questions.

A. *Political Opinions.*—The primary political difference between the two sects was that the Sadducees maintained that a man's destiny is in his own hands, and that human ingenuity and statecraft are therefore to be resorted to in political matters; while the Pharisees clung to the conviction that the political relations with foreign nations, like the theocracy at home, are under the immediate control of the holy one of Israel (Josephus, *Ant.* xiii, 5, 9; xviii, 1, 4, with *War.* ii, 8, 14; Mishna, *Berachoth*, 33 b; *Niduk*, 16, 72). That the Sadducees, who were the real aristocracy (Josephus, *Ant.* xviii, 1, 4) and the successful warriors in the Maccabean struggles (*Ibid.* xiii, 16, 2; *War.* i, 5, 3), should have espoused such political views was the natural result of their political success. Moreover, the doctrine that what a man possesses is what he deserves was peculiarly gratifying to the successful and aristocratic caste. Besides, in this respect, as in all other matters, the Sadducees showed their conservatism in abiding by the Pentateuchal views that a man is rewarded in this world according to his deeds, and that prosperity and adversity are a test of piety and wickedness (Deut. xxviii, 1-68, with *Psa.* xxxvii, 25).

B. *Doctrinal Views.*—1. *Rejection of the Oral Law.*—Foremost among the doctrines of the Sadducees is the tenet that the Hebrew Scriptures, with the authoritative explanations and glosses which developed themselves in the course of time, are the sole rule of faith and practice, thus denying that there existed any orally transmitted law to supplement the written law, to which their opponents the Pharisees laid claim; or, as Josephus states it, “the Pharisees have given to the people many statutes from the traditions of the fathers which are not written in the law of Moses; and it is for this reason that the Sadducees reject them, saying that it is only the written observances which are binding, but those which are transmitted by the fathers are not to be observed” (*Ant.* xiii, 10, 6). For the better understanding of this important question, it must be remarked that the Pharisees and the orthodox Jews to the present day

have an oral law in addition to the written law. This oral law consists of sundry religious, ceremonial, and social practices which obtained in the course of time, and which were called forth either through the obscurity, conciseness, and apparent contradiction of some of the written enactments, or through the inapplicability of some of the Mosaic statutes to the ever-changing circumstances of the commonwealth. Some of the enactments contained in this oral code are undoubtedly as old as the original laws which they supplement and explain, so as to adapt them to exceptional cases not specified in the Mosaic law; others, again, were introduced by the spiritual heads of the nation after the return from the Babylonian captivity, because the altered state of the nation absolutely required these regulations, although there was no basis in the Mosaic law for them; while others originated in party feeling, to shield the pious against even approaching the limits of transgression. Now the *Sopherim* (i. e. scribes and the lawyers), after the Babylonian captivity, who found this accumulated traditional code, tried to classify and arrange it. Those practices which could be deduced from or introduced into the text of Holy Writ by analogy, combination, or otherwise, were regarded as the legitimate and authoritative traditional exposition of the law [see *MIDRASH*]; while those practices which obtained in the course of time, which were venerated and esteemed by the people both for their antiquity and utility, but for which neither author nor apparent reason could be found in the written law, were denominated *A traditional law of Moses from Sinai* (חלכה למשה מסיני), because from their antiquity and importance it was thought that they must have come down orally from the lawgiver himself. It is this oral law which the Sadducees rejected; and in their conservatism they adhered to the ancient Hebrew Scriptures, as well as to those time-honored explanations and practices (הלכות) which were not at variance with the text of the Bible. It must be distinctly borne in mind that by their rejecting traditions is not meant that the Sadducees rejected all the traditional comments upon the law and the ancestral practices not found in the Bible. Even the Talmud itself only charges them with rejecting some things (*Sanhedrin*, 33 b; *Horiyoth*, 4 a), and there is but little doubt that those practices which they rejected were originated by the Pharisees, the liberal party whose innovations the conservative Sadducees disliked, and regarded as an encroachment upon their priestly and aristocratic rights. In the Mishna specific points of difference between the Pharisees and Sadducees are mentioned, which are unimportant—such, e. g., as whether touching the Holy Scriptures made the hands technically “unclean,” in the Levitical sense, and whether the stream which flows when water is poured from a clean vessel into an unclean one is itself technically “clean” or “unclean” (*Yadain*, iv, 6, 7). If the Pharisees and Sadducees had differed on all matters not directly contained in the Pentateuch, it would scarcely have been necessary to particularize points of difference such as these, which to Christians imbued with the genuine spirit of Christ's teaching (Matt. xv, 11; Luke xi, 37-40) must appear so trifling as almost to resemble the products of a diseased imagination. Indeed, it will be seen in the course of this article, from the enumeration of their distinctive tenets, that the theological views of the two sects were not so much at variance as might have been supposed, and that the Sadducees in many cases actually adhered to ancient traditions, while the Pharisees abandoned these traditions and introduced new statutes in order to raise the people, whose true representatives they were, to a nation of kings and priests. See *TRADITION*.

That the Sadducees also rejected the prophets and Hagiographa, and only believed in the Pentateuch, as is asserted by Epiphanius (*Adversus Hæreses*, xiv), Origen (*Cels.* i, 49), Jerome (*Comment. on Matth.* xxii, 31-33), and followed by some modern writers, is utterly