

the truth, they abandoned themselves, without reserve, to their passions, and to the most infamous pleasures.

The true God was adored by the *Jews* alone. The *Samaritans* boasted of being also his worshippers, and had quitted their idols, but would never join in communion with the *Jews*, for whom they entertained an implacable hatred. They received the books of *Moses* only; rejecting all the other prophets, and pretended that God was to be adored on the mountain *Garizim* alone, where they had built a temple. Religion was on the wane even among the *Jews*, of whom there were two sects: the *Pharisees* and the *Sadducees*. The *Sadducees* believed not the resurrection, nor the immortality of the soul, nor that there were angels or spirits; and they imagined God himself corporeal. A great number of the priests, and of the principal men of the nation, had embraced this impious and gross heresy.

The *Pharisees* maintained good doctrine, believed things spiritual, the resurrection, and the life of the world to come. They made profession of keeping the law with more than ordinary exactness; but then, they mingled with it many superstitions, and frequently made no account of the commandments of God, in order to advance their human traditions.