

of diet, or solitariness of habitation. It is recognized that if these things sometimes help character, they may also hinder it, and in no case can they take its place. If that be wanting they are of no avail.

More conspicuous than the ascetic type of piety among the Jews was that which may be called the confessional type, for want of a better name. There was, indeed, little disposition, so far as we can judge, to formulate creeds as expressive of their religious belief, or to insist upon orthodox views as essential to membership in the national church. Certainly the Sadducees of their later history seem to have been sceptical enough in their tendencies, and yet retained their place within the fold, though perhaps without much goodwill from the majority, who were more in sympathy with the Pharisees. But on the part of both Sadducees and Pharisees alike there was a strong disposition to exalt the fact that in the Old Testament Scriptures they had as their peculiar possession the authoritative revelation of God from heaven. As the Apostle Paul more than insinuates in the Epistle to the Romans, they gloried in the law and in their ability to teach the world, while yet they transgressed its commandments. They attached more value to the knowledge of the law than to the keeping of its precepts. The people that knew not the law they regarded as accursed, irrespective of their conduct or character.

Those who were mainly responsible for this exaggerated estimate of knowledge were, of course, the scribes or lawyers, whose business it was to expound the law for the instruction of the people. They magnified their own office and found it no very hard matter to persuade their hearers that a right understanding of its requirements was in some degree a substitute for obedience. Of course, the plain statement of their position at once exposes its weakness.

Now the text on which they built their theory was undoubtedly found in the Old Testament. Such compositions as the 119th psalm, or the latter part of the 19th, or the 1st psalm, furnish a natural starting point for such a development of