

PHARISAISM AND WAR

that he could go for forty days and forty nights in the strength of the newspaper references to Nietzsche and Treitschke ! The more tempting, the more dangerous : if, as the result, Pharisaism should become more deeply ingrained into the English character than it was before, what an appalling problem the settlement will be, and how miserable we shall make ourselves and others when the war is done.

But at the outset we must clear our minds of the common thought that Pharisaism means hypocrisy in the modern sense. The Pharisees were not hypocrites in our meaning of the word, though it is true that hypocrisy breeds very easily in an atmosphere such as they favoured. If the mass of them had been hypocrites, as we understand it, they could never have conquered and held the respect of the Jewish people, as they plainly did. For the present, therefore, we will sweep away all thought of conscious hypocrisy. Let us try to understand the real thing and how it touches ourselves. Pharisaism was not invented in Judea in the last three centuries before Christ. The Old Testament shows a gradual growth of its influence throughout Hebrew life. Except in Plato and Epicurus, Greek philosophy smelt strongly of its blossom, and the rigidity of Roman civilization had many a trace of its starch. It is not even necessary for Pharisaism to have anything to do with organized religion at all. English party politics are Pharisee through and through, and there is a conventional element in much in our pictorial art and music which, if it is not Pharisaism, at least produces the same weary distaste and shows the same absence of self-criticism and aspiration. Religion by its enemies is often enough identified with Pharisaism, but it is only fair to notice that among those who neglect or attack religion may be found Pharisees of the ripest and most matured flavour, while only an honoured few escape completely. As a matter of fact, a real religion is the only true and permanent cure. Let us then confess