

has surely set in ; senility has commenced ; the promise of his life is gone ; its fruitfulness and enterprise ended ; he is already withering up. When a family doats merely on its ancestry its sun will soon set. We see the operation of its stunting, arresting principle in all regions of human life. The poet, musician, painter, sculptor, architect, who ties himself slavishly to an antique school of art, however splendid, infallibly cramps his genius, and forfeits original power. No one can study the period of the *Renaissance*, in any of these departments of art, without perceiving how certainly that "backward look" enfeebles the boldness of the forward flights of free genius. So is it with nations. It was notably so with the Pharisees, who constituted the bulk of the Jewish nation. With eye fixed on the past, they refused, with a passionate impatience, to conceive of a future which should not be an exact reproduction of antiquity. If the results hoped for are to be grander, the lines on which they are shaped must be precisely the same. Messianic times must be a glorified duplicate of Mosaic or Davidic times. Hence it came about that the Pharisees learned to pass more and more lightly over the scriptures that prophesied of a suffering Messiah, robed only in moral power and spiritual majesty, and exercising only a spiritual sway over the inward hearts and lives of men ; and brooded more and more intently on such descriptions as might be construed into predictions of a Messiah excelling David in material power, who should dash the yoke off their neck, and set up with unparalleled splendour an earthly throne of David at Jerusalem. With successive generations this tendency strengthened, till by the time of Christ it had hardened into a narrow inveterate bigotry which no evidence could shake. Need we wonder at the fierce rage with which they met the claims of the Carpenter of Nazareth who made so little of those material and external splendours which to them had become the chief attraction of the Messianic hope ? Pharisaism, with its backward look, and stunted conceptions, had no place for the development of new forces, in new and unfamiliar, unhistoric lines. Hence its bitter opposition to that moral and spiritual revolution which Christianity evoked. Itself a dead rigid thing, it must be broken up and perish under the clash of those newly evolved vital forces, which were destined to bring fresh life into humanity. The new wine must burst the old dried bottles. Wedded as it has become to the past, Pharisaism must be shivered in pieces to give place to the kingdom of Light, Liberty and Progress which is at hand. Hence in part the severity with which Christ struck at it as an irreconcilable antagonist of His Kingdom.