

It is the sphere of the prophet. And there is a greater virtue than obedience. It is reverence. Isaiah learns first of all that the God of Israel is a holy God; and then he learns that the God of Israel is the God not of Israel only, but of the whole earth.

He learns that the God of Israel is a holy God. Samson was not concerned with holiness in God, or with its immediate consequence, righteousness in man. A rude sense of justice he had, but little sense of obligation to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before his God. Even Samuel was more concerned with the welfare of the nation than with his own moral approach to God. Isaiah can do nothing until his lips have been touched with the live coal from off the altar. It is most momentous.

And as soon as he learns that God is a God of holiness, Isaiah learns also that He is the God of the whole earth. The same God who reaches to the heart stands in the centre of the Universe. And ludicrous as it will appear in moments of unbelief, he sees that his message is to the inhabitants of Sidon and to the men of Babylon, and he answers at once, 'Here am I, send me.'

The last is Paul. The athlete, the statesman, the prophet—beyond these there is a higher, the Christian. John the Baptist was a prophet—there

hath not arisen a greater prophet than John the Baptist. Nevertheless he that is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he.

What is the Christian's secret? It is love. Samson did not understand it. He considered neither the Philistines nor the foxes when he sent the burning brands through the corn. Samuel did not understand it. 'I remember what Amalek did to Israel'—and Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord. Isaiah did not understand it. But stay—Isaiah had at least a glimpse of it. Or if not Isaiah, then that other who said, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.'

For if love is the secret of the Christian, the secret of love is self-sacrifice. 'Though I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels (and of prophets), and have not love, I am nothing. Love suffereth long and is kind.'

The shadow of a great rock? Samson will do in the days of youth; Samuel in manhood, when patriotism is the divinity; Isaiah as the years pass, and the patriot finds that there is a God of the Gentile as well as of the Jew. But there is no refuge for a whole wide world of weariness except in the love of Him who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee.

## The Advent of the Father.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM A. CURTIS, M.A., B.D., PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY  
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IN 1890, after many years of self-denying labour, Mr. Allan published an admirable history of the breezy Lammermoor Parish of Channelkirk, (anciently Childeschirche, *i.e.* Cuthbert's Church), whose people are his flock in spiritual things. Full of minute detail, leaving no house or holding unremembered and no stone unturned, the book was a signal act of ministerial piety towards the

parish. Last year Mr. Allan published *The Advent of the Father*.

In *The Advent of the Father*,<sup>1</sup> Mr. Allan has shown that as he moved to and fro among the homesteads of his people at the head of the

<sup>1</sup> *The Advent of the Father*. By Archibald Allan, M.A., Minister of Channelkirk. Glasgow: Maclehose, 1907. Pp. viii + 486. Price 6s.

Leader Valley, his mind was also busy with matters of religious concern to countless thinkers beyond the parish confines, and busy to some purpose, for he has sent out from his study a book possessing in a very marked degree fervour, originality, scholarship, and insight, exhaling, as a religious book from the hills ought, a certain spiritual ozone.

In his preface the writer says that he 'does not presume to address the theologically learned, but those only who may be found in any well-informed and intelligent congregation professing the Christian religion.' But the book has a message for the most 'theologically learned' as well as for the general reader, for it is obviously the outcome of the long brooding of a cultured and poetic mind upon a theme of supreme importance, and one does not need to share its views in order to receive a mental and spiritual stimulus from its perusal.

What is the book, and what does it undertake?

The somewhat cryptic but suggestive title finds its explanation in a sentence of the preface: '*The writer has attempted to realise for himself the Thought and Faith of Jesus from the Four Gospels, in order to reach, in the interests of his ministry, some certainty regarding His distinctive teaching concerning the Father-God and all human relationship towards Him.*'

The spirit and standpoint of the book are well caught and depicted in the quotation from Carlyle, which stands as a sort of literary frontispiece at the beginning:

'The essential, still-awful, and ever-blessed fact of all that was meant by "God and the Godlike" to men's souls is again struggling to become clearly revealed; will extricate itself from what some of us, too irreverently in our impatience, call "Hebrew old-clothes," and will again bless the nations, and heal them from their basenesses and unendurable woes, and wanderings in the company of madness! This Fact lodges, not exclusively or specially in Hebrew garnitures, old or new, but in the Heart of Nature and of Man for evermore.'

Perhaps the most striking feature of the book as a modern exposition of the Mind of the Master is its use of the Fourth Gospel as 'notwithstanding modern criticism . . . the fundamental authority in the work.' It is surely a very significant mark of the times that a Scottish scholar of alert critical

sympathies should rest his positive conception of the Truth in Christianity mainly upon the teaching of the 'theological gospel.' A fresh study of the Johannine presentation of our Lord and His gospel, dispassionate and without critical pre-judgment on the score of its contrast and *prima facie* unlikeness to the Synoptic, is a welcome addition to our theological resources, and no small part of Mr. Allan's claim to our gratitude rests upon the simple fact that he has furnished it. To the end of time there will be in Christendom one order of mind to which the Synoptic Gospels will supremely appeal as a record of the truth as it is in Christ, and another which will always turn with the half-closed eyes of deeper and further vision to the Gospel according to John. Readers of the former class will find much in this book to impress them from the other side. Readers of the latter class will recognize in its author not a little of the spiritual sense, the mystic contemplation, and the poetic sympathy which are prerequisites for a just appreciation of, and a true fellowship with, the writer of the *solitary* Gospel. He has written in the spirit and in the faith of a distinguished critic whose measured estimate of the Gospel according to John affirms that 'it often raises us above details of which the certitude will probably never be ascertained into a region where we apprehend the nature and existence of a *Word of Life*, essentially the same in heaven and on earth, human yet divine, the incarnation of the concord of the spiritual universe. Yet, while no gospel soars so high, none stands more firmly, more practically, below.'

The book contains fifteen chapters, whose titles may be given as indicating its scope: The Kingdom of God; Life and Death; Personality of the Father; The Child-Faith; Perfect Human Character; Jesus, Judge of Sin; Pater-Pantheism; The Forgiveness of Sin; Jesus and His Contemporaries on Sin; His Law of Forgiveness; Conscience, Justice; The Atonement; Jesus and His Church; Gethsemane; The Ideal Human Race.

It is not a work whose contents are easy to summarize, for it is so comprehensive as to include well-nigh every great topic in the field of Christian doctrine, and its thought is unfolded without regard to any very rigid scholastic principle of division. But in easy, almost informal, sequence it reproduces in modern language the impression left by the teaching of Christ in the Gospels as a whole on the character and scope of the kingdom of God in

nature and in man, in history and in experience; on the personal and universal Fatherhood of God revealed throughout His kingdom, in the world of law, in the heart and history of man, above all in the life of Jesus the Incarnate Word; on the divine affinity of man, God's child, his ideal of Christ-like likeness to the Father, his end and destiny of communion with the Father and with the Universal Family in heaven and on earth; on the meaning of sin and moral law, the conditions of forgiveness and the appointed means of reconciliation; on the divine humanity of Jesus, the meaning of His sufferings, the motive of His life, the significance of His work and teaching; and on the true conception of the Church of Christ, and of the human race.

Salient features of its teaching are its passionate protests against the secularization of Nature, itself in all its manifold life the very child of Providence, divine in origin and meaning; against 'the old dialectical division of the All into Spirit and Matter,' which is regarded as 'the arch-error'; against the insuperable distinction between God's immanence and transcendence; against the overlaying of the simplicity of our Lord's teaching with rabbinical, patristic, and scholastic doctrine; against the silence of the creeds and confessions of Christendom concerning the literal and universal Fatherhood of God which is fundamental and all-pervasive in that teaching; against the virtual suppression of the true humanity of Jesus under the conviction of His divine Sonship; against the misrepresentation and caricature of God the Father, and the exaggerated estimates of sin and its proper treatment involved in most Atonement theories; against all law-dominated negative conceptions of Christian salvation here and hereafter; and against the building of the Church of Christ according to Old Testament or worldly models. In most of these and similar protests Mr. Allan is voicing the best mind of our age, and fighting for a winning cause. He writes with native eloquence and trenchant power. Many of his sentences, and indeed paragraphs, haunt one's memory as well as arrest one's steps and provoke one's earnest thought. The book abounds in very notable utterances: scarcely a page fails to yield some striking thought. Especially are its mingled courage and reverence disclosed in such passages as those in which it deals with death as a natural '*janua vitæ*,' a change or transition from life to life (pp. 55, 236),

the natural purity of birth (p. 53), miracle (p. 226), the Sabbath (pp. 233-4), prayer (p. 233), heaven and hell (p. 438).

Central in the book is its doctrine of God the Father, which Mr. Allan is content to describe as Pater-pantheism, a term not very homely certainly, however convenient, and, if we mistake not, capable of being reformed into Patripantheism on grounds of linguistic propriety. It is a form of Theism opposed alike to Deism with its alienation of God from Nature, and to Pantheism with its attenuation of His personality, almost Spinozistic in its sense of the divine in Nature, including man, thoroughly loyal to the Gospels in its grasp of the personal intimacy of the Divine Father's communion with His offspring. 'The Father and Nature are one' (p. 226). 'Time and space to Jesus are visions of the Father' (p. 212). 'True Nature is ever true Divinity, and Nature is Jesus' grand reservoir of truth. He makes no statement that has not its roots buried in Nature' (p. 19). 'Nature is indeed God's child of eternity, while the babe is His child of to-day. But both are filled with His life and love' (p. 149). 'From everywhere in universal nature the eyes of God look into ours, lambent with the glory of His light and love. We can always see God. But it is rarer to believe it is God we see. For we do not see the natural and the eternal as identities. This is possible only when, simultaneously, spirit and eye, or the sense that acts for the eye, apprehend the Father as Jesus did, by a faith which is identical with sight' (p. 204).

God is the begetter of all life. In Him all life lives and moves and has its being. Our life is one with His, as a child's is with his parents'. It is the passion of His love to give life, and to cherish it and foster it, that they who have been given life may have it more abundantly. Not King nor Judge is He, but Father. All that a father can be, He must be. A father's patience, sympathy, and forgiving love are His. Human fatherhood is but the faint and shadow-blurred reflexion of the divine. We do not know God as He is unless we know Him as indeed our Father. 'The Father-nature of God is the all-important factor in the teaching of Jesus, and its omission as the matrix of His doctrine necessitates a complete revision of the entire body of "what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man." This is the task that is

laid upon the followers of Jesus in the present day' (p. 353).

To God's unbroken Fatherhood the creatures of His love respond with filial trust. The lilies look to Him for raiment, the birds for daily food. In man also the child-faith, the child-obedience, and the child-love sum up his true relationship to God. Communion of heart and mind and will with the Father of spirits is man's highest privilege and supreme vocation. 'Not to be "*righteous*," as the Hebrew imagined, is the path to the perfection of Jesus and the perfected conscience, but to be "*good*" as the Father in heaven is alone "*good*"' (p. 336). To be 'good' as God is good implies service and love towards others, willingness to forgive, readiness to return good for evil, to love one's enemies, to lay down one's life for the objects of one's love. To cherish the heart of a little child before God is to be fit for His kingdom. 'We believe that Jesus found every one of the precepts set forth in the Sermon on the Mount suggested and more or less fully practised every day by children. He no more imagined His scheme of perfect human character than He received it by the hands of angels from heaven' (p. 105). Few passages in the book are finer than that upon this child-faith extolled and demanded by our Lord (chap. iv. pp. 101-122), from which a few sentences may be taken to serve as an illustration of the writer's thought and diction. 'In nothing has Jesus proved so clearly His profound knowledge of the constitution of man as in the front place which He has given to faith in His religious and moral teaching. Bishop Westcott has rightly affirmed that it is "the absolute condition of all life, of all action, of all thought which goes beyond the limitations of our own minds"; and has further declared that "we live by faith however we live." "Blind faith" has been characterised by Huxley as the "one unpardonable sin." But there is, perhaps, in every soul a form or kind of faith from which all other forms of faith grow, which cannot be conceived as other than blind, seeing it is of an unconscious nature, a form of faith that cannot, indeed, be distinguished from "instinct." . . . It is surprising at first that Jesus should have made this Faith-communion with Himself the essential condition of receiving the Father's life to everlasting. So simple, so feeble, so wavering and unsubstantial seems the thing we call Faith. But what more faltering and fluttering

than the seed blown to the ground? Blown upon the winds, it seems put outside of all provision. Yet it is under the care of every force in the universe. Again, what more blind-like and helpless than the child-lip groping for the breast? Yet here is action obedient to a faith which is not conscious but which is necessary to life, and life more abundant. Both seed and child are respectively under necessity to enter into communion with the ground and with the parent life, and each is led by operative influences which are "blind" indeed, but blind only in the sense that blindness is also the condition of the motions in the protoplasmic cell, which through such blindness attains to the fullest light of life and conscious vision.'

Not all readers will find themselves in agreement with Mr Allan's strikingly original interpretation of many difficult passages in the Gospels, e.g. those relating to the significance of Jesus' death, to Gethsemane, to the unforgivable or rather not-to-be-forgiven sin, to justice, to sin and its forgiveness, though the reviewer has seldom radically disagreed and would point to omissions rather than to errors in the argument and citations, but all will feel the force of his positions, and acknowledge his insight and his grasp. We would have liked to quote the fine passages on 'the path of the Eternal' (p. 122), on 'Justice' (pp. 340-351), on 'Nature divine' (pp. 192 ff.), on prayer (pp. 233, 287), on the Sabbath (p. 234), and on vital religion's essential independence of written records (pp. 247 ff.); but we shall content ourselves with some illustrations of the writer's high conception of the Person of Jesus, a conception so lofty as, if that be possible, to verge on exaggeration in its expression, as when he says: 'Who or what God is, we only know by who or what Jesus is' (p. 267), and 'The object of high worship, before whom we do in these latter days prostrate our souls and adore, is no other than the Being who has been formed within us by the Person and teaching of Jesus' (p. 398). He is unequivocally set forth as sinless (p. 160), as the Eternal Way (p. 184), though with sobriety it is said (p. 165) that He 'did not profess to originate a perfect moral law, but professed to live one, and by His life to reveal a perfect moral law to the world.' 'Where all thinkers walk and speak in the most doubtful mind, Jesus rings out His declaration of the Father's personality and presence in a voice more deeply assured than any one perhaps ever per-

mitted himself to employ regarding the existence of himself. And it is a faith which the universal experience of Christendom, as well as the sub-consciousness of the race of man, has verified as having given a new vitality to the world, and to humanity a new heaven and a new earth. No enthusiasm known to the human heart equals in intensity and power that inspired fervour which creates a world-wide maelstrom round the personality of Jesus. His revelation of the Father-personality of God has practically called the human spirit out of the region of the shadow of death' (p. 91). 'Jesus is in this way God to man, for man can apprehend no higher conception of Deity. He is to man necessarily a God only-begotten' (p. 92). 'There is not on the plane of all existence a more transcendent "revelation" of the Eternal Being than is to be seen in the Son of Man' (p. 93). 'Jesus has undoubtedly become the absolute conscience for the world' (p. 330).

In conclusion, we would say that while it would be easy to point to a score of minor blemishes in the language and the phrasing of the book, many of which a more vigilant proof-reader would have amended, Mr. Allan has given us a book which takes a high place among our purely Scottish contributions to that fresh system of Christian truth towards which our hearts and minds are set in eager quest. We think his book deserves a closer reading and a warmer appreciation than it has yet received. We admire its courage, its independence, its vigour, its limpid clearness, its visionary enthusiasm. We feel that behind it is the cry, 'Woe is me if I write not this word!' The author is conscious of repetition and redundancy, a forgivable failing in a book of power, but it is not always given to the hand that wields the pen to have dexterity with the pruning-hook. We heartily welcome this his first contribution to the growing literature of our native theology.

## Recent Foreign Theology.

BEAUCHESNE & C<sup>ie</sup>, Paris.

*L'Enfance de Jésus-Christ.* Par Père A. Durand, S.J. (Fr.2.50).

*Le Besoin et Le Devoir Religieux.* Par Maurice Sérol (Fr.2.50).

*La Notion de Vérité dans la 'Philosophie Nouvelle.'* Par E. Le Roy (Fr.1.50).

*L'Encyclopédie et la Théologie Moderniste.* Par J. Lebreton (Fr.0.75).

These four volumes belong to the *Bibliothèque Apologétique* in which has already appeared M. Lepin's *Christologie*.

FISCHBACHER, Paris.

*La Philosophie Religieuse de Charles Renouvier,* par André Arnal (Fr.7.50). Here is a large volume of over 300 pages; and after a short sketch of Renouvier's life, every page is occupied with a discussion of his philosophy. It is a religious philosophy, not a philosophy of religion. But it includes what is now so popular under the name of the philosophy of religion, and at the end gives separate chapters to an exposition of Judaism and of Christianity. The work should

be the more acceptable in this country that it is so un-English. Theology we know, and philosophy we know, but of religious philosophy we are ignorant and afraid.

*Les Procédés de Rédaction des trois Premiers Évangélistes,* par Firmin Nicolardot. Dr. Nicolardot's name is new to us, but he is manifestly no novice in New Testament criticism. He gives a list of the relevant literature at the beginning of his book, and refers to most of its numerous items throughout. And yet it can scarcely with justice be said that he is more occupied with the literature of the Synoptics than with the Synoptics themselves. He uses considerable freedom of rearrangement, and has some new suggestions which are well worth considering.

*La Religion de la Solidarité,* par T. Fallot (Fr.3.50). This is a volume of short essays, of which only the last four are occupied with 'La Religion de la Solidarité.' A more important series is that on 'Life without God.'

*Job Fils de Job,* par Etienne Giran, is an essay on the problem of evil in the form of a modern dialogue between Job and some of his friends.