

Reviews of Books.

A SPIRITUAL PILGRIMAGE. By the Rev. R. J. Campbell, M.A. London : *Williams and Norgate.* 7s. 6d. net.

No more notable person than the late minister of the City Temple has in recent years passed out of dissent into Holy Orders. For some twenty years he was one of the most prominent figures in English Nonconformity, and his secession from its ranks caused something of a sensation. Even before his advocacy of the New Theology, his reputation as a preacher was well established, and it is no secret that Dr. Joseph Parker, orthodox of the orthodox, hoped that the young minister of the Union Church, Brighton, would succeed him at the City Temple, and with this hope in view gave him his death-bed blessing. Dr. Parker had little, if any, admiration for the Anglican Church, and what he would think of Mr. Campbell's subsequent career and of this book we cannot think.

The title of the book seems inadequate, inasmuch as it is the record not of one pilgrimage only but of several, and as we lay down the book—which has not a dull page from first to last—we do so with the uncomfortable feeling that the writer may not even now have found a permanent religious home, notwithstanding his observations about the Church over which the Bishop of Rome presides, for he is travelling along a road which has led many a shrewder man, many a better balanced mind, to acknowledge the supremacy of the Papal See. But there is another reason why the title seems to us inadequate. It fails to indicate the scope of the book. It is much more than an account of his conversion (or as he would most likely prefer us to call it, his re-conversion), to Anglo-Catholicism, it is in a very real sense his autobiography, for in it he tells the whole story of his life from childhood and gives us an insight into the working of his mind, needless to say, in an eminently readable, pleasant style.

Mr. Campbell comes of a nonconformist stock. His grandfather was a Congregational minister and his father, who is still living, is a minister of the United Methodist Free Church—a man, we are told, “of liberal tendencies in his thinking,” with a rooted distaste for Calvinism. Even the grandfather selected the Congregational ministry because he would subscribe to no confession of faith, so that the three men seem to have been cut out of the same piece.

Mr. Campbell's early years were spent with his grandparents in Ulster. This was necessitated by delicacy from which he has suffered more or less all his life. It prevented him from going in for athletics and seriously handicapped him in Oxford days. In Ulster he was brought into contact with its virile Presbyterianism and he gives us in his opening pages many vivid recollections and impressions. Educated at a local Grammar School, he eventually became a “student teacher” there, and then obtained a post in a small high school in Cheshire under a Clerical headmaster. This was in more ways than one “a pilgrimage.” He not only passed from Ireland to England but he came into touch for the first time with the English Church. “The whole tone of the school was Anglican,” and he was confirmed by Bishop Moorhouse. He gives us a comparison between the Ulster Presbyterianism and the English Nonconformity with which, of course, he came into contact too, when, as he says, his father brought him home. It is in many ways one of the most significant passages in the book. Nothing else that he has written so plainly shows his present position and his attitude

towards Evangelical religion. We will transcribe the whole passage and ask our readers to consider it carefully.

The first (difference) was that the "Church" disappeared, and the "Gospel" took its place. I hope no Nonconformist will feel aggrieved by this statement. In my early days many would have been quite satisfied with it and considered it a credit to Nonconformity rather than a reproach; they would have said that the Gospel came first and the Church a long way second; perhaps most of them would say so still. But while I did not know what this change of emphasis meant I was very conscious of it. I could not but realize that the pulpit was tuned to a different note unless when my father was preaching. Evangelization was the thing chiefly aimed at, and that of a particular and well-marked type. Personal relationship to Christ constituted the subject-matter of the sermons, being born again and progressing individually in the spiritual life till the soul attained to complete sanctification. We were constantly exhorted to come to Jesus, to make our peace with God, to forsake the world and so on—all very good and right in its way but not what I had been accustomed to hearing. It is no exaggeration to say that the very idea of the Church seemed to be almost superfluous. Any suggestion of the necessity of being grafted into Christ's mystical body by baptism or otherwise was wholly absent. To be converted, to be saved, was held up before us as almost the sole objective of the penitent sinner, that is, when penitence could be induced in the sinner at all. *It repelled me, though I did not quite know why and I never got over my repugnance thereto.* [The italics are ours.] It was repugnance to that individualistic gospel of salvation more than anything else which led to the utterances on my part which produced the controversy of ten years ago. In that controversy I definitely broke with Evangelical Nonconformity. What has happened since, so far as I am concerned, *is not a return to that*, but to the idea of the Church as the Church, the sphere of sacramental grace, the home of the growing soul, our Lord's visible witness and representative on earth, the society in which He dwells and which His Holy Spirit guides and inspires.

That is the passage and its full significance is readily discerned. Mr. Campbell seems to lack the happy knack of perceiving that the truth generally lies between the extremes. Is he quite sure that he has done full justice to the stalwart Protestantism of the Ulster Presbyterians? Does he seriously ask us to believe that the Gospel of salvation, which he is pleased to term "individualistic" is not faithfully proclaimed by Ulster Nonconformists, and that the Church is more prominent in their teaching than the Gospel. Moreover is it possible that, while he was yet in his teens, he was so discriminating a theologian as to perceive this "difference"? However, we know now where we are, or rather where he is—he has not returned "*to that*" and his words justify the inference that he still entertains his "repugnance" to it. Then we may be more than ordinarily dense, but we wonder what he means by "the Church as the Church": does he mean "the Church as THE Church," or what? It is probably a question of emphasis. Where would he have us place it? Is there not a Central Churchmanship which embodies in its teaching all that is true in these two conceptions of which Mr. Campbell speaks? They are not mutually exclusive, as he appears to think. It isn't one side or the other, it is something of both sides. Surely he feels, despite what he has written, that God deals with human souls not in the bulk, so to speak, but as individuals, and that personal relationship to Christ is of the deepest importance? It seems terrible to think of this being "repugnant" to him. Surely, too, "the growing soul" depends upon the personal relationship to Christ and not merely upon membership

in the Church. What saith the Scriptures of the New Testament? But then we are well aware that on the question of sacramental grace that the school with which Mr. Campbell has allied himself goes far beyond the teaching of Central Churchmen. There again it is the question of the *via media*! Certain views are, we say, "poles asunder": Mr. Campbell seems to be so constituted mentally that he easily reaches the remote ends. He travels at lightning speed and does notice all he passes!

It is indeed the story of a strange career. Of Mr. Campbell's genuine piety and remarkable gifts there can be no doubt whatever, but it remains all the same a tale of alternations from one set of opinions to another—from Ulster Presbyterianism and English Nonconformity to Anglican Churchmanship. Then we find him—after the spiritual awakening of his early student days, identifying himself with Oxford Nonconformity and preaching in its Chapels until requested to desist by the authorities of "The House." After that we find him selecting a Father Confessor and in close association with the most extreme Churchmanship! Then in the end he once more turned back into dissent—he could not see his way to subscribe to the Prayer Book or, indeed, to any formulary—and the twenty years of his Brighton and London ministry began. As we know they have ended and at the age of forty-nine he is ordained! To be quite frank—we do not think that Mr. Campbell himself sees how strangely mixed his career has been and in how many fields he has ploughed! What does he expect persons, who have not moved about from one communion to another, to think of such an incident as his preaching on October 14, 1915, for Dr. J. D. Jones at Bourne-mouth (even though it was a long standing engagement) and motoring the next day to stay with Bishop Gore and to be "received once more as a Communicant of the Anglican Church?"

Mr. Campbell, as we might expect, tells very fully the whole story of the New Theology controversy and of his still earlier battle with the representatives of Labour. So far as the former is concerned, the exigencies of space prevent our going into the matter, but it is noticeable that he regrets the publication of his *New Theology*. He goes even further where he says, "I am perfectly willing to be judged by the wholeness of my pulpit utterances during the many years that I have been a preacher, *with the sole exception of this period of disputation and cross purposes.*" Perhaps never before has a writer so completely condemned his own work as Mr. Campbell has done. He says—"It was too hastily written, was crude and uncompromising in statement, polemical in spirit and gave a totally wrong impression of the quality of the sermons delivered week by week from the City Temple pulpit." He devotes twelve pages to Bishop Gore's reply to his book and it is certainly remarkable, as he observes, that it consists of lectures delivered from the very pulpit Mr. Campbell now occupies. They dealt with the opinions of Sir Oliver Lodge as well as with those of the minister of the City Temple, upon whom it evidently made a great impression, and he admits that it led him to face certain difficulties, with which the Bishop dealt, "with new earnestness."

Needless to say, those who still have any doubts as to Mr. Campbell's faith in the Divinity of our Lord can now bury them. He tells the story, too, of the Christ-Myth controversy and of how he eventually dissociated himself from those "who denied the historicity of Jesus," and he affirms his conviction that this school "need no longer be taken seriously."

A keen observer, he has given us his reflections upon an almost endless variety of subjects.

A prolific reader—he tells us, at considerable length, about the books that have powerfully influenced him, and they represent a bewildering

variety of subjects. Newman he read "with mingled delight and repulsion." Dean Inge's *Christian Mysticism* he fitly describes as "a truly delightful book." Fairbairn's *Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, "a remarkable compendium of profound learning without much that was illuminating in its whole bulk," though he speaks more kindly of other works by the same author. From Dale on *The Atonement* and from his *Living Christ and the Four Gospels* he confesses he "did not get much in the way of enlightenment." Dr. Marcus Dods and Professor A. B. Bruce were "a great inspiration" to him. J. R. Illingworth helped him "up to a point." He tells us with equal freedom and candour what he thought of Clement, Origen, Tertullian and Cyprian. From the day he commenced his ministry at Brighton he began, he acknowledges, "to submit to the influence" of German theologians. Now he marvels at his "docility under their bold assertions" and frankly acknowledges that he "believed them too readily." For this he holds Professor Cheyne mainly responsible, and he is probably right. He does not hesitate to say that German liberal Protestantism, Harnack's not excluded, "rationalizes everything." But does not all this reveal a certain "instability," a weakness which by the way he seems to regard as the peculiar inheritance of the Celt?

A careful student—he lets us into the secret of his method of study—a method which made Sir W. Robertson Nicholl "shudder"—an elaborate system of manuscript books in which he has been wont to make notes of everything he has read and record his impressions.

A man with a wide circle of friends—he has given us here and there in these pages graphic portraits of many of them, and in some cases he makes them appear very different from what we have often imagined. For instance, he describes Dr. John Clifford as "the most magnanimous little giant in the world" with nothing "small" in his make-up. Then again of Keir Hardie he says he "was greater as a prophet than he would ever have been as a statesman. But he was a great man all the same and I shall ever be glad to have known him." In another passage he speaks of him as "one of the most unselfish and high-minded men I ever met." For Dean (afterwards Bishop) Paget he had the greatest admiration and affection and he tells us that for years after he entered the Nonconformist ministry he continued to consult him when in perplexity. This friendship began in his student days at Christ Church.

Scattered through the book are many outline sketches of notable persons with whom Mr. Campbell has been in touch. To one of these we must refer at greater length. He made the acquaintance of Tyrrell who, he says, "did not attract him much." He expresses wonder "if he was ever truly a Roman Catholic at all," though elsewhere he has recorded Tyrrell's saying that if the Church of Rome were to die the other Churches might order their coffins, and it is strange to find that it was Tyrrell's *Christianity at the Cross Roads* that made it plain to him that the Christ he was preaching "was the Christ whom the sacramental system of the Catholic Church presented to mankind as liberal Protestantism neither did nor could." This was a determining factor in his secession. He came to the conclusion that "Either Jesus was what the Catholic Church said He was or He did not exist; either He was the man from heaven, a complete break with the natural order of things . . . or He was nothing."

So far so good. We feel it will be at least satisfactory to many people to know that to Mr. Campbell our Blessed Lord is "neither a mistaken visionary nor a pious fancy of later times." But is it not a little daring to assert that "Protestantism is afraid of the Supernatural" just because it is less credulous than certain types of Catholicism, Anglican and Roman?

Is it fair to even suggest that the great bulk of Protestants, Episcopalian and non-Episcopalian, hold those views which Mr. Campbell describes as "liberal." But in the passage we have quoted in which he says that Jesus was either "supernatural, super-rational, super-everything or He was nothing" he goes on to say that "this is scarcely the Christ of Protestantism at all, whether liberal or conservative." There, then, is the suggestion. But all the great leaders of English Nonconformity hold those views as to the Person of our Lord which the Catholic Church has ever held, as expressed in the Creeds of primitive and undivided Christendom. There is not enough in this discovery of Mr. Campbell's to drive him out of the ranks of Nonconformity and send him right across English Churchmanship to its farther side. But this is his present location (shall we say—for the present?)—he stands committed to the extreme Anglican position and for no good reason that we can discover, unless it be the fact that he has a perfect genius for going to extremes. It can hardly be pleasing to the majority of his "advanced" Anglican friends to find that he does not recognize the invalidity of his past ministry, and he is careful to explain that his reordination was "no slight upon Nonconformity in general" nor upon his own ministry in particular.

We shall watch his career with more than ordinary interest. A man whose published sermons reached an average circulation of sixty thousand weekly would be sure to make his influence felt in any community, and the English Church pulpit is not so strong that such a forceful person is likely to be lost sight of. In this connexion it is worth observing that Mr. Campbell admits that his weekly published output was too considerable and he has no intention of ever again attempting such an exacting task.

NO CHURCH: NO EMPIRE. By the Rev. J. J. R. Armitage. London: Robert Scott. 3s. 6d. net.

This is an interesting collection of addresses delivered to men in various churches in the Archdeaconry of Rochdale. They are arranged in three parts. The first six are headed—"Has Christianity Failed?" and they are manly, straight talks. The second set, entitled "The Case against Germany," will be read with interest, especially the addresses in which Mr. Armitage so forcibly sets forth the analogy between Prussianism and Socialism. He is able to point out in his preface that the views he expresses obtained confirmation (after the addresses were written) from the published reports of the interview, in May last, between the Kaiser and the leaders of the German Socialistic party. The closing section is entitled "Victory and After," and among other subjects the problems of drink, poverty and gambling are dealt with courageously.

In these days when it is fashionable to discredit the Reformation and decry the Reformers it is refreshing to come across a preacher bold enough to speak of that movement as a factor in the building up of our Empire. "England's supremacy," he says, "dates from and is essentially due to this. All movements which would undermine the work of the Reformation are dangerous to the liberty of the individual." In certain quarters capital is being made at the present time of the fact that Germany was the home of Luther and of Protestant thought. The desire is to make Protestantism appear responsible for all that we deplore in German character and conduct to-day. But Mr. Armitage reminds us on his very first page that Germany has been "for generations the centre of Jesuit intrigue and of materialistic Socialism." We welcome this volume, without qualification, and wish for it the wide circulation it deserves.