Entre Nous.

Percy Dearmer.

A man of many sides like Percy Dearmer makes an ideal subject for a biography. But the interest and excellence of *The Life of Percy Dearmer* (Cape; 10s. 6d. net) is also to be attributed to the fact that it has been written by his wife, and so we have an intimate picture of the man, full of personal touches, and yet at the same time we have a curiously impartial account. For Mrs. Dearmer has been able to stand, as it were, a little distance away and from it has surveyed P. D. and his work. Nan Dearmer was Dr. Dearmer's second wife, marrying him in 1916. But she had known him from her childhood. There is an Introduction by the Very Rev. W. R. Matthews. 'No one,' he writes, 'could be five minutes with Percy Dearmer without realizing that he was a man of great originality.'

Dr. Dearmer was born in London on 27th February 1867. He seemed to owe little to his heredity. His father was not distinguished and his mother was an erratic person, who took little interest in her younger son. He went to Oxford as an ardent Conservative and a member of the Primrose League but it was not long before he turned to Labour. There he was influenced by Gore and his thoughts turned from Law to the Church. Joseph Clayton, speaking of the early days at Oxford, says: 'Stewart Headlam, with his Guild of S. Matthew, inspired for us the gospel of Christian Socialism and presented the Church of England as the instrument for its achievement. Socialism for P. D. meant more than economic change. It meant opening the kingdom of art and beauty to all. He was never an Anglo-Catholic theologically. His love of beauty made him appreciate Anglican ceremonial, but he was always "broad" and he was repelled by "Roman" doctrine.' He was one of the first members of the Christian Social Union and worked with Scott Holland on the *Commonwealth*. In October, 1891, he wrote to Gore: 'I am awfully hopeful though, because the one remedy that has been carefully avoided, Democracy, is about to be tried—humanity is going to give humanity a chance at last. What a splendid age to live in! . . . I am very happy.'

In 1891 he was appointed to the Curacy of St. Anne's, South Lambeth. In 1900 he became Vicar of St. Mary the Virgin, Primrose Hill, and there he had the opportunity of working out all the teaching he had given in the *Parson's Handbook*, which was to make liturgiology attractive to the Church, stressing the necessity of the co-operation of the Church with great artists and craftsmen.

He influenced the Church very considerably also by his reform of hymns and hymn tunes. 'With others concerned, he set to work upon the *English Hymnal*.' There was included in this hymnal many little known but great hymns of literature, such as 'John Bunyan's "He who would valiant be," Blake's "To Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love." Whittier's "Immortal Love," and "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind," John Donne's "Wilt thou forgive," John Milton's "The Lord will come and not be slow."'

During the war he resigned from Primrose Hill and offered his services with nursing units in Serbia. This was followed by a period of work in India and America, and then in 1919 he returned to England. He was soon appointed Professor of Church Music at King's College, but, apart from that, he was entering upon a difficult period, when it became more and more apparent that the Church authorities were not to make use of his services. He held no further Church appointment until 1931 when, under the Labour Government, he became Canon of Westminster. In the Introduction writes Dr. Matthews: 'I think we may say that no other church in Christendom could have produced a man like Dearmer or, having produced him, could have kept him in her fold. . . . But we must not flatter ourselves too much. We held him, but did we make the best use of him? I scarcely think so. There is only one touch of sadness in this life, whose dominant note is that of "joy and health": it is the feeling that these great gifts were for many years given no adequate sphere for their exercise.'

It was during this period that the Guildhouse experiment with Miss Royden was tried—an experiment in the more vivid sense of fellowship amongst Christian people.

In view of Dearmer's work in beautifying the services of the Church—his interest in ritual—what Harold Anson, to whom he talked freely, states was his attitude to the Eucharist is of special interest. 'The Eucharist meant for him the gathering of neighbours in a friendly meal, filled with the sense of Jesus present, as the true leader of men, wherever, and in whatever cause they met. He cared intensely that such a meal should be surrounded by all that was beautiful in colour, in music, in ceremony; but it was not as a ***substitute***,

but as a *focus*, for the common meals in which neighbours met to affirm their mutual love, and their mutual discipleship.'

Some of his Sayings.

'I know perfectly well why I personally became a Christian. It was because I felt that the world is extremely beautiful, but eminently unsatisfactory.

'Christianity, with its main principle of the spiritual informing the material, alone seemed to present a sane, simple and comprehensive system. Christianity alone offered a religion which the man of the world could accept, and a worldliness which no saint could afford to ignore.'[1]

'(Apropos of the Exhortation at the end of the Marriage Service): "We really ought not to set up a regular polygamist like Abraham as an example to young bridegrooms."

'"A man can dance to the glory of God, a man can make love knowing that he is fulfilling a Divine purpose, but he cannot gamble to the glory of God."

'"Christianity is like radium—seldom found in pure form."'[2]

C. F. Andrews.

Mr. John S. Hoyland was just reaching the last pages of his manuscript on C. F. Andrews when the news came to him of Andrews' death in Calcutta (4th April 1940). *C. F. Andrews, Minister of Reconciliation* (Allenson, 3s. 6d. net), is in no sense a biography of Andrews, but rather a study of his life and teaching, written in fullest sympathy. As a young man Hoyland went out to India as a Quaker missionary. He arrived in India in 1912, and his first months were spent with Andrews, then himself a missionary professor in St. Stephen's College and an Anglican clergyman. From this time they never lost touch with each other.

The main principle behind Andrews' conception of reconciliation was his belief in the extension of the principle of the Incarnation, in the sense of self-identification with the needs and problems of the poorest. His was a ministry of Reconciliation through Friendship. He was much influenced by Tagore's thought. 'Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut? Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee! He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle, and even like him come down on the dusty soil. . . . Here is thy footstool and there rest thy feet where live the poorest, and lowliest, and lost.'

Andrews had an unshakeable belief in men. He was confident that somewhere in every man there was hidden an element intensely worth while, and it was to this 'Divine Witness' that he appealed.

Following his year at Woodbrooke and journeyings to different parts of the world, where he felt that distress was most acute, Andrews settled for a short time in Cambridge, and there he developed his idea of a new foreign policy under a Minister of Reconciliation. His task would be 'to mobilize good-will and to send groups of Franciscanly-minded people to other countries.' 'Just as St. Francis,' Mr. Hoyland writes, 'sent out his little groups of young people, over a war-torn world, to build creative peace by working with their hands, without pay, on the fields of impoverished peasants, or for the suffering lepers in the leper-houses, so later on C. F. Andrews was to inspire the sending out of very numerous similar teams (in 1939 there were, for instance, at least two hundred of these teams known to have been at work in England alone).' There is no suggestion that Andrews initiated this type of social service—indeed he was greatly influenced himself by one outstanding example. This was the work done in the earthquake area of Bihar by a team working under the Swiss internationalist, Pierre Ceresole. 'Where there is one man, or a tiny group of men, willing to go the whole way in obedience to the guidance of the Spirit of good-will and service, miracles of reconciliation can be brought about.

'One such miracle, on this occasion, was the fact that the British Government in India and the Indian National Congress, which up to a few months before had been an outlawed and proscribed body, co-operated in supplying Rs. 50,000 each for the purchase of land and building materials for the new villages. It is extremely rare for these two great bodies to do anything together. They are exceedingly restive bed-fellows even at the best of times.'

But although Andrews was not the founder of work camps, it was his enthusiasm and example that kindled enthusiasm in others and brought about their extension on a large scale so that they were held in Spain (under war conditions), Norway, Italy, France, Denmark, Sweden, Ireland, Holland, Germany, and in the U.S.A.

One of the last and one of the most interesting of the chapters—in view of conditions to-day—gives an account of the work done by a team of

[1] P. 82. [2] P. 294 f.

English who went to Germany in August, 1939, to co-operate with a team of Germans in the improving of a Youth Hostel at St. Goar. 'We found,' he says, 'as on so many previous occasions, that the mere fact of working arduously together for the sake of other people, possesses in itself an extraordinary power of creating friendship.' But again, 'It may as well be said here that we made no discernible impression on this pre-conditioned mentality in our work-mates. They were, so to speak, foolproof, from the Hitler Jugend point of view.'

Proving One's Love.

'I felt it a duty and a privilege to try to show to India, by working in a small but crowded corner of that great country, the one power which alone can give true peace to individuals and to nations, the one means by which conscience can be aroused to condemn social evils and to try to get rid of them. I had two priceless gifts to offer to India—surgery and Christ. I had already seen a little of the effects of ignorance and superstitions on the sufferings caused by injury and disease. I had the means of alleviating and curing by humane and scientific methods. But more than all that, I had a vision—a dim and imperfect vision, as all our imaginings must be until we see "face to face"—of some of the things Christ could do for India. Could I in some small way show something of the love of God, and inspire others to do the same?'[1]

Whole Time Service.

'A man said to me, "Sir, we want a new missionary at ——." "What for?" I replied. "You have got —— there." "No good" is all he said in answer. I knew that the missionary in question was keen on the work and liked the people, and was surprised to hear this from a man of good character, who I knew was involved in no quarrel or grievance against the missionary or his society. So I asked, "Why do you say 'No good'?" The devastating reply was: "He is always kind if you talk to him, but at time of drought when people all around were half starving for lack of water they asked him for permission to draw water from his bungalow well. He refused. It is no good to have a person like that talking to us about Jesus Christ."'[2]

Jeremiah xii. 5.

'We have other evidence of the delicate spiritual perceptiveness of Jeremiah, but none more impressive than this: that somehow it was borne in upon him that God's answer to all his questioning resentment was simply a call to a more strenuous and difficult conflict than that through which he had just passed. He had asked for consolation, for a justification of the ways of God to men, for vengeance on his enemies; he received a ringing summons to still more arduous tasks. "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses?" It is a fine metaphor. "Pull yourself together," God seems to say. "What you have just passed through is to what yet lies before you, as a race with footmen is to a race with horses. This is but the beginning of your battles for truth and self-mastery, a mere preliminary skirmish, and here you are wasting your time and energy in self-pity and childish vindictiveness!" Jeremiah's great soul responded to the challenge: indeed only a great soul, capable of responding to it, could ever have heard it.'[3]

Ye did it unto Me.'

At Santiniketan, which lies in the depth of the country, I was right away from any Church. My dearest friend, Susil Rudra of Delhi, was staying with me. His son was about to go out to France in order to do ambulance and hospital work. He said to me, 'Sir, I wonder you do not miss the Holy Communion.' Quite instinctively, I pointed to the boys in front of me and said, 'These are my Holy Communion.'

After he had returned to India he came to me one day and told me that the words I had said before he left for France had remained with him all through the months when he was tending the sick and the wounded out there at the Front. When he had to keep up his strength of will, in order to give his very best to the wounded and dying in their agony, he used to say to himself, 'Here is my Holy Communion.' It was no mere sentiment. He saw Christ in the midst of all the human suffering when it was at its very worst. He heard the voice of Jesus saying, 'Ye did it unto Me.'[4]

[1] T. Howard Somervell, *Knife and Life in India*, 18.
[2] *Ibid.*, 271.
[3] H. H. Farmer, in *The Christian World*, 4th July 1940.
[4] C. F. Andrews, *The Good Shepherd*, 127.

Printed by Morrison & Gibb Limited, Tanfield Works, and Published by T. & T. Clark, 38 George Street, Edinburgh. It is requested that all literary communications be addressed to The Editor, King's Gate, Aberdeen, Scotland.