

THE LIFE OF PERCY DEARMER. By his wife, Nan Dearmer. With an Introduction by the Very Rev. W. R. Matthews, Dean of St. Paul's. (Cape; 10s. 6d.)

Dean Matthews rightly fastens on two qualities in Percy Dearmer that were conspicuous throughout his life: keen perception of the Christian message of social justice and eloquence in 'his passionate preaching of the holiness of beauty.' While an Oxford undergraduate at Christ Church, Dearmer came under the influence of Ruskin, Morris and Stewart Headlam, and, shedding the conservatism of boyhood, decided to become a Christian socialist clergyman in the Church of England. From residence in Pusey House, Oxford, as Secretary to Charles Gore, through various London curacies Dearmer arrived at the vicarage of St. Mary's, Primrose Hill, and there he remained for fifteen years. At Primrose Hill came opportunity for the full development of the art of public worship. (Anglican critics unkindly spoke of 'British Museum religion,' so considerable was the vicar's research concerning ancient rites and ceremonies in the *Ecclesia Anglicana*.) But for all the elaborate church ritual and beautiful ceremonial, Dearmer was never an Anglo-Catholic. His biographer is quite right about that. Peter Anson, who testifies to the beauty of the services at Primrose Hill, and their influence in keeping him for some years from becoming a Catholic, is persuaded that 'there was much more of the Lutheran about him and I think he (Dearmer) would have revelled in Scandinavian Lutheranism, with all its ceremonialism and liberal theology, had he discovered it as a young man.' Dearmer's dislike of the Catholic Church was strengthened by what he saw on frequent travels on the continent. Dogma repelled him, and not even in Rome itself did the art of public worship achieve the standard of Primrose Hill. 'He had something of a bee in his bonnet where Rome was concerned,' Mrs. Dearmer remarks. By 1915 the process of 'finding his way back to a broader religion more suited to him,' and the desire of relief from parochial responsibilities, brought him to resign his living. A period of engagements with the Y.M.C.A. in France and India, followed by some years of an undenominational joint ministry with Dr. Maude Royden in London, sermons at West End churches, and a professorship in Ecclesiastical Art, at King's College, ended with the appointment by Ramsay MacDonald to a canonry at Westminster Abbey. (But it took a manifesto to the Prime Minister, signed by many influential and important persons, to get this piece of preferment.)

Dr. Dearmer earned the canonry of Westminster. He had deserved well of the Church of England, and the recognition was late in coming. For twenty-one years he was the active secretary of the London Christian Social Union, a society that stirred considerably the consciences of Church of England people—lay and clerical. By his *Parson's Handbook* Dearmer raised immeasurably the standard of taste in the public worship of the Church of England, in the fittings and decoration of its churches, in the apparel of its clergy. Though 'not really a musical person,' he took immense pains to improve the hymnody of the Church of England, and was chiefly responsible for the *English Hymnal* and the later *Songs of Praise*; the latter judged more suitable for non-high-church congregations.

All this and more Mrs. Dearmer tells us in her intimate and appreciative biography. Percy Dearmer's good looks, his witty speech, his kindness (and absent-mindedness), his life-long devotion to the theatre (and diminishing belief in Christian dogma), his family relations and domestic pleasures—these are set down for the comfort of his friends and the edification of a larger public interested in the life of a very gifted Anglican clergyman. Dean Matthews is satisfied 'that no other church in Christendom could have produced a man like Dearmer, or, having produced him, could have kept him in her fold,' and that is quite likely to be true.

JOSEPH CLAYTON.

RELIGION AND SCIENCE. (Papers read at the Cambridge Summer School of Catholic Studies, 1939.) (Burns, Oates and Washbourne; 7s. 6d.)

The relations of religion and natural science in the last four centuries have too often degenerated either into an antagonism based on misunderstanding, or a facile reconciliation based on confusion of their distinct functions. Thanks largely to such writers as Meyerson, Whitehead, and Maritain, the true hierarchy of the branches of knowledge is now becoming better understood, and the time is ripe for a wider appreciation of how religion and science are to be interpreted in Christian life. The present volume contains much useful material towards this end, both for the expert and the layman in science. A strong team of writers deals with the general position of religion *vis-à-vis* science; with the Thomist philosophy of science; with current physical theory; with mechanist and non-mechanist views in biology; with our knowledge of prehistoric man; and