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WORSHIP
AND
THE COMMON LIFE

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WORSHIP
&
THE COMMON LIFE

BY
ERIC HAYMAN, M.A.

*

‘.....When the two shall be one, and that which is
without as that which is within.’ 2nd Ep. Clement, 12

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To the fellowship of men and women, world-wide and
beyond the world, who are made one in Christ Jesus.

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FOREWORD

THIS BOOK covers a sequence of thought which will be familiar to many who have kept in touch with the modern trend of theological writing. The sequence will be unfamiliar, and perhaps unwelcome, to others who have not realised the very significant movement which has been taking place since the change in the face of Europe which began some ten years ago. But if the ground be familiar, I do not apologise for adding one more book to those more wisely written and more widely read. The approach here made to this well-known country, and the course followed in it, are in many respects different. The characteristic writing hitherto has in the main arisen within the Catholic tradition of the Church, or among its near neighbours in the neo-Calvinism which is stirring the Free Churches to-day. I am writing, on the other hand, from the point of view of some thirty years' membership of the religious Society of Friends, and a corresponding period of growing and deepening conviction in a pacifist interpretation of the Gospel of God in Christ.

But if this membership, and the conviction which is admittedly connected with it, have been proved through varied experience of joy and pain over this number of years, I write none the less as a member of the universal Church of Christ, in which alone my ultimate loyalty to Him is expressed. This sense of the universal bond is so far stronger than any denominational loyalty as to make it essential for one's most cherished ties to be tested at all times, lest they become fetters of imprisonment rather than bonds of unity in the One Spirit. Similarly, the universal loyalty binds me ever more closely to my fellow-Christians in all lands, and makes it unthinkable that any conviction derived from my Christian allegiance should be magnified into a barrier of separation from a fellow-Christian whose conviction, and consequent duty, may at present be opposed to my own. The power of God's

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Holy Spirit makes the life of the Christian disciple, but it also creates the community within which alone that life has meaning.

The approach made in this book arises from a deepening sense of the profound religious issues which are disclosed by the present war, and is also made at a time of searching personal re-awakening arising from a deepening experience of the corporate spiritual life. In the present situation it has become clear to me that the religious Society to which I owe an incalculable debt might make a great potential contribution at this precise time in the world's need. But I see also certain inherent weaknesses which might not only prevent that contribution from being made, but might even involve grave danger and a misleading influence to many. The world situation is now presenting a challenge which can only be met by the supernatural strength of the Church as the Body of Christ on earth. That strength can be made available to the world only as it is developed in a worship which is sacramental in its character, and is expressed in a life which reflects that sacramental experience. I believe that these conditions can be fulfilled by the Society of Friends without any departure from the basic testimonies which have marked its life from the outset. They entail, however, that the Society should be clear and decisive in its witness to the Christian faith, both in the truth which that faith affirms and in the falsehood which it denies: further, that the Society should recognise that its worship and its life alike are bound into that faith and inseparable from it; and finally that it shares that worship and that life as part of the adoration and the total sacrificial service of the one, holy, catholic Church.

I hope to be saved in this part of my task from the spirit of a late seventeenth-century Quaker who, seized by a similar conviction, was 'not a man governed with that meekness that becomes his doctrine', and who later persuaded the newly formed Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts 'to redeem that misguided people to the knowledge and belief of Christ', with such effect that the founder of the S.P.G. conceived

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the duty of ‘reducing the Quakers, who are so numerous in those parts, to the Christian faith, from which they are totally apostatized, and so may be looked upon as a heathen nation’.¹

Finally, it should be made clear that the concern developed in this book is so far wider than any denominational issue that its expression is in humble gratitude to the world-wide fellowship of men and women who are one in the Body of Christ.

E. H.

September, 1942

¹ Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism*, pp. 484–493.