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**Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture, Tradition and Reason**

by Nigel Terence Atkinson

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Theology in Application for the Degree of

Master of Arts

**DURHAM UNIVERSITY**

May 1995

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## Chapter One

### Richard Hooker: Theologian of the Church of England

#### *1.1 Introduction*

Richard Hooker (1554-1600) priest, preacher and theologian is widely recognised as "unquestionably the greatest Anglican theologian".<sup>1</sup> It has also been said that it is difficult "to overestimate the importance of Hooker" because he "was great with the greatness of Shakespeare".<sup>2</sup> It is accepted that Hooker's "greatness" is located primarily in the fact that his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* mark, in the words of Aidan Nichols, "the true beginning of Anglicanism". According to Nichols it is in the *Laws* that "Anglicanism first achieved a relatively coherent theological form".<sup>3</sup> Others agree with this assessment. Louis Weil claims that "the first major exponent of the Anglican view was...Richard Hooker" whilst John Booty thinks that Hooker "came to represent a vital turning point in the history of Anglicanism".<sup>4</sup> So authoritative is Hooker's position in the field of Anglican theology that Anglican theologians have often felt the need to demonstrate that major developments in Anglican thought and practice are merely extensions of the ideas already contained within the *Laws*. Examples of this are not hard to find. John Keble, who edited the *Laws* at the start of the Oxford Movement, added a preface in which he attempted to argue that Hooker would have given his blessing to the High Church movement; even though Hooker's theological dependence on Calvin and Augustine had previously been taken for granted.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, as the Church of England gradually moved towards an inclusive ministry, Stephen Sykes was compelled to justify this development in

the Church's life by arguing that it was a process entirely compatible with Hooker's theological first principles.<sup>6</sup>

But what are Hooker's theological first principles? Obviously, if Hooker occupies such a prominent position in the galaxy of Anglican theologians it is important to ascertain, as precisely as possible, the theological matrix that informed his thinking. However, it is at this very point that great difficulties are encountered. Over the years various "schools" of Hooker scholarship have arisen with the result that an unfortunate impasse has been reached with some even concluding that Hooker's theology was contradictory and even fatally flawed.<sup>7</sup> That the current state of doctrinal play in the Church of England might also be fatally flawed has also recently been pointed out.<sup>8</sup> It is doubtful whether a Church without a recognisable, articulate doctrinal commitment can survive for long, unless it is merely content to be held together by some undefinable "ethos" or by its ties to the establishment. Naturally, it might be argued that Anglicanism's lack of theological coherence springs from the lack of theological integrity that lies at the heart of her own most representative theologian; but that would be to misunderstand both Hooker and the Church of England's theological edifice. So what accounts for the apparent theological ambiguity that seems to afflict so much current Anglican thinking?<sup>9</sup> A clue may be found in the similarity that exists between the varying shades of opinion that exist with regard to Hooker in particular and with regard to the present day Church of England in general. Both seem to have only one thing in common. They are adamant that whatever else Hooker's theology is deemed to be, and whatever else the Church

of England is seen to be, it is certainly not a theology, or a Church, that bears the characteristic stamp of the Reformation.<sup>10</sup> This almost unanimous interpretation of Hooker can, however, be disputed and the primary purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate that Hooker's handling of the vexed question of authority is certainly compatible with an explicitly Reformed outlook.<sup>11</sup> This may, in turn, lead to a rediscovery of the Church of England's theological heritage.

In order to proceed, however, we need to remove some of the obstacles from our path. We shall need to investigate, first of all, how the various schools of Hooker scholarship have tried to distance Hooker from the Reformation in order to highlight some of their weaknesses. We shall then, secondly, need to examine Hooker's own stated perception of his relationship to the Reformation. We shall then be in a position to move in to the thesis proper which will look at Hooker's understanding of Reason, Tradition and Scripture. It might then become clear that, far from distancing himself from the Reformation Hooker was, in fact, seeking to remain faithful to its doctrinal commitments and was, on the contrary, distancing himself from a Puritanism that had distorted some of the central tenets of Reformed thought.

## *1.2 Hooker: Reformed theologian of the Church of England?*

That Hooker's theological position is not that of the Reformation has been frequently stated. John Keble, the High Churchman of the Oxford

Movement and the nineteenth century editor of Hooker's works, maintained that English theology underwent such a "decisive change" in Hooker's hands that the next generation of English divines (Laud, Hammond and Sanderson) owe to Hooker's *Lawes* the fact that the Church of England "continues at such a distance from Geneva, and so near to primitive truth and apostolical order".<sup>12</sup> This assertion, once made, seems to have become the test of orthodoxy and most students of Hooker seem to be unduly anxious in their attempts to out-do one another in seeking to demonstrate Hooker's deviation from the doctrinal stance adopted by both English and Continental Reformers. Both Egil Grislis and W.J. Torrance Kirby have conducted their own exhaustive investigations into the state of play into the world of Hooker scholarship and it is worth briefly examining their conclusions.<sup>13</sup>

Egil Grislis argues, after a careful inquiry into the shape of Hooker scholarship, that four clear positions emerge, although he concedes that there is much overlap between them. Grislis argues that Hooker can be read, first of all as "a champion of reason". Citing an impressive array of writers on Hooker it is easily seen how many have seen Hooker's distinctiveness to lie in that "he elevates reason into the criterion" by which theological truths necessary to salvation are to be judged.<sup>14</sup> Hooker's "rationalism" has been much lauded and even today "scholars continue to speak of Hooker as a rationalist without further clarification".<sup>15</sup>

Secondly Hooker has been read as a "Christian humanist". This school claims Hooker brought "the spirit of the Renaissance" into close contact with "the spirit of the Reformation". In a sense this "humanist" approach is merely an extension of the rationalist approach since what is highlighted in the Renaissance-Humanist perspective is Hooker's treatment of Reason. Since "law can be discovered by the light of reason" and reason is, at the same time, its interpreter then "reason is coordinate or even...superior to revelation".<sup>16</sup> This suffuses Hooker's work to such an extent that in effect he becomes a spokesman for "Renaissance optimism" along with Shakespeare and Bacon.<sup>17</sup>

A third approach, isolated by Grislis, is that which tackles Hooker in terms of such "existential categories as the self, its existence, and its meaning".<sup>18</sup> Essentially this is an attempt to read modern categories of thought into Hooker and an exponent of this is W. Speed Hill. According to Grislis, W. Speed Hill is able to bring to light certain Kantian presuppositions in Hooker, most especially in the way in which "ethical reason" is to be distinguished from "scientific reason". Grislis admits that Hooker is here being interpreted in wholly secular terms. But what is to be noted is the prominence that reason plays in any assessment of Hooker's work.

The fourth and final approach is that taken by those who have reacted against such claims that Hooker personified the "Renaissance perspective".<sup>19</sup> This reaction is an understandable backlash against those who have so elevated Hooker's rationalism that they have obscured the extent to which Hooker's



understanding of grace overarched the significance of Reason. This attempt to correct what is seen as a distortion of Hooker is best articulated by Kavanagh. Although Kavanagh agrees that Reason is an important element in Hooker's thought he warns that Reason has its place but only in so far as it is aided by grace. "Reason is competent", writes Kavanagh, "as will is free but only when assisted by supernatural power. [Hooker's] apparent confidence in reason is thus qualified and we may say, therefore, that Hooker has great confidence in supernatural, but not natural, reason".<sup>20</sup>

Interestingly, Grislis' researches into the differing schools of Hooker scholarship have tended to be grouped around the organising principal afforded by Hooker's use of Reason. W. J. Torrance Kirby's analysis is more profound, historical and systematic in approach. Kirby approaches the problem via the vexed question of Hooker's so called "Anglicanism". As we have already seen, Hooker's standing as the first "Anglican" theologian is largely accepted by all shades of scholarly opinion. By using the term "Anglican", however, it is immediately being signalled that a unique approach is being adopted that marks the Church of England as essentially doctrinally distinct from Roman Catholicism and Genevan Presbyterianism; after all, if Anglicanism's doctrinal position lies between Rome and Geneva it clearly implies a singular doctrinal approach. Consequently a great deal of both Hooker scholarship and Anglican self-understanding is built on the premise that Hooker, as the theologian of Anglicanism, was forging a new and novel approach to theology that exhausted itself somewhere between Rome on the one hand and Geneva on the other.<sup>21</sup>

But, if this is true, it must be accepted that neither Hooker, nor the Church of England of which he was the theological representative, was in any way committed either to the doctrinal principles of the English and Continental Reformation or to the doctrinal position hammered out by the Council of Trent. If this is true, then what were the doctrinal principals which Hooker and the Church of England embraced at the time of the Reformation? If Hooker and the Church of England did not embrace the main theological underpinnings of the Reformation did they remain clinging to a late medievalism or to a Tridentine Roman Catholicism? If not, what was the theological base on which they justified severing themselves from Rome? In answer to this question three responses can be given. It can either be said that Hooker's and the Church of England's doctrinal stance is made up of a mish-mash, a syncretistic mixing of the two theological systems, a mixture that can constantly change depending on which theological parties at any one given moment are in power, or it could be argued that Hooker did find a true coherent, theological *via media* that placed the Church of England at some distance from the Reformation. But if one accepts that a true theological *via media* was adopted that placed Hooker between Rome and Geneva, the doctrinal distinctives of this *via media* must be clearly spelled out so that it can be seen that Hooker is not a Reformed theologian and the Church of England is not to be considered as one of the Reformed Churches of Europe. The third, and most likely position that can legitimately be adopted, is that Hooker, and the Church of England, embraced the Reformation and that, as a point of fact, a Reformed position was willingly adopted in all cardinal doctrinal tenets.

Notwithstanding this however, Kirby tells us that numerous scholars have tried to maintain that "Hooker *qua* Anglican, and therefore a proponent of a doctrinal *via media* between Protestantism and Catholicism, was not strictly committed to the principles of reformed theology".<sup>22</sup> But there are serious problems with such an approach. First of all it is anachronistic, argues Kirby, to apply the label "Anglican" to Hooker. Not only was the term "Anglican" never used by the theologians of the Church of England at the time of the Reformation, it has also to be borne in mind that when it was first used it was used as a blanket label for all members of the Church of England; with no theological discrimination taking place. The fact that they might have been either strict Elizabethan Calvinists or more liberally minded Jacobean Arminians did not alter the designation "Anglican" from being attached to them. Thus, because the term "Anglican" is so theologically vacuous and imprecise it is almost meaningless as a term of theological definition. This should put us on our guard on at least two fronts. Firstly, the fact that the term "Anglican" is a term of later coinage, and was used to try to describe the unique doctrinal position of the Church of England, lends weight to the argument that, at the time, the theologians and Reformers of the Church of England were blissfully unaware that they were hammering out a theological position that was clearly distinct from that being pursued by the Reformation in general. And the reason that they were so blissfully unaware was not due to theological naiveté on their part but simply because they were convinced that they were not departing, in any doctrinal sense, from the high ground occupied by an explicitly Reformed position.

Secondly, even if we accept the anachronistic term "Anglican" being applied to the sixteenth century Church of England, it gets us no further forward in terms of defining the theological stance of either Hooker or the Church of England. In which case it might as well be dropped.

Having disposed of this issue Kirby then goes on to identify the varying schools of scholarly opinion that have attempted to define Hooker as someone less than wholeheartedly committed to the Reformation and who was trying to establish some form theological of *via media*. The first school of thought isolated is that which is associated with the nineteenth-century Oxford Movement. Obviously, in trying to link the Church of England more directly with Rome, it was incumbent upon the Oxford Apostles to represent the Church of England's doctrinal position as less than Reformed and closer to Rome than had otherwise been perceived. This they attempted to do by developing the theory of the *via media* and trying to read it back into Hooker, the Articles, the Prayer Book and the Ordinal.<sup>23</sup> Although Newman confessed that the

"*Via media* has never existed except on paper, it has never been reduced to practice; it is known not positively but negatively, in its differences from the rival creeds, not in its own properties; and can only be described as a third system, neither the one nor the other, partly both, cutting between them, and, as if with a critical fastidiousness, trifling with them.."

he might well have taken warning that his desire to create a true *via media* was doomed to failure.<sup>24</sup> The Church of England was too wedded to the Reformation in her doctrinal formularies that any attempt to secure a divorce had little chance of success. Eventually, Newman admitted this writing in his *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*,

"The *Via media* was an impossible idea; it was what I had called 'standing on one leg'; and it was necessary, if my old issue of the controversy was to be retained, to go further either one way or the other".<sup>25</sup>

Newman's ideas with regard to Anglicanism in general however have proved to be tenacious and difficult to dislodge. The fact that Newman himself abandoned the Anglican *via media* should at least have given scholars pause to reassess the strengths of the *via media* case. But this has not happened. On the contrary, it has greatly influenced scholarly approaches to Hooker, the majority of which seem to have accepted various *via media* interpretations. The two remaining approaches then, apart from the one adopted by Keble and to which we have already referred, can be read as mere adaptations of the High Church school in that they all accept that some form of *via media* concept is operating.

The first line of critical opinion is that which sees great similarities between Hooker and Thomas Aquinas.<sup>26</sup> As Thomas Aquinas is regarded as Rome's chief theologian any similarities noted between the two theologians serve, indirectly, to pull Hooker away from any explicit dependence upon Reformed thought. Kirby correctly points out that Hooker's debt to Aquinas can best be seen in his hierarchically structured universe "which mediates in a "gradual order" between man and God." This, Kirby goes on, contradicts "the reformed doctrine of an immediate and inward union between the soul and God through the action of imputed righteousness".<sup>27</sup> This, of course, is devastating not only to a Reformed soteriology but to Reformed theology in the main for it would affect the concomitant doctrines of man, sin, the fall and scripture.<sup>28</sup> If

this is true, then it would have to be conceded that Hooker should not in any way be looked upon as standing in continuity with Reformed thought.

The second school that offers a further adaptation to the varying *via media* theories is that which regards Hooker as an Erasmian Humanist. Egil Grislis, as we have noted, also identified this school of thought, although he preferred to identify it as a species of Christian Humanism. Kirby, however, cuts down to the theological quick by pointing out that Hooker's close identification with Erasmus consists "in a rejection of the key doctrinal planks of *sola gratia* and *sola fides*".<sup>29</sup> It is well known that Erasmus had an attenuated view of the fall and thus held to the possibility of man cooperating with grace so weakening Reformed teaching on man's depravity and of his need for salvation *sola gratia* and *sola fides*.<sup>30</sup> Again, such arguments only serve, once more, to distance Hooker from the Reformation and strengthen the case for the *via media*. As Kirby concludes all these varying schools of thought have one common theme. And that lies in their "insistence upon [Hooker's] deviation from the theological and doctrinal principles associated with the high ground of reformed orthodoxy".<sup>31</sup>

That Hooker scholarship has largely adopted this path raises acute problems. First of all, as Egil Grislis has pointed out, not only was Hooker deemed to be have been following a largely Augustinan-Calvinistic line until the nineteenth century, it is also true to say that "Hooker's Calvinistic roots have been proclaimed with rather more enthusiasm than investigation".<sup>32</sup> This in itself

demonstrates the need for theological research in this area, not only because there has been more heat than light in stressing Hooker's Reformed pedigree, but also because it begs the question as to why for some three hundred years it was accepted that Hooker was broadly Calvinistic and that this consensus is now so sharply disputed.

Moreover, the necessity for further research in this area can be given further impetus. It is often argued that Hooker is not an English theologian of the Reformed school but this assumption is built largely on the premise that Hooker's theological opponents, the authors of *A Christian Letter* and "unfayned favourers of the present state of religion, authorised and professed in England", were the true theological inheritors of the Reformation and that in opposing them Hooker was opposing, not only Calvin and Luther in particular, but also the whole of the Reformation in general.<sup>33</sup> Hooker's theological adversaries were constantly championing themselves as the real disciples of Calvin and the Reformation and trying to denigrate Hooker, not only as less than Reformed, but as a secret agent of Catholicism attempting, "covertlie and underhand", to bring the Church of England back under Papal dominion.<sup>34</sup> But we need to be on our guard at this point. Firstly, Hooker would have been the first to warn us not to accept the Puritans' assessment of his own work. He constantly portrays his opponents as labouring under a "misconceit" and this "misconceit" attaches itself to their understanding of the *Lawes* as much as it does to their understanding of Reformed orthodoxy; which, Hooker argued, they had

misunderstood. It is, in any case, bad practice to base an assessment of an authors work on a judgement passed on it by its adversaries.

But, secondly, we have Hooker's own declaration that he did not consider himself a theological opponent of the Reformation and that the Church of England was one of the Reformed churches. That this comes from Hooker's own pen and is his own professed opinion is a weighty, if not irrefutable, argument to all those who have tried to prise Hooker away from a consistently Reformed position. Hooker was to argue that the Church of England should to be counted as one of the Reformed churches in matters of doctrine, notwithstanding outward differences in ceremony and government. In this context we should note that when Hooker objected to the Puritans' insistence that all the Reformed churches should be alike in matters of ceremony he could do so whilst at the same time maintaining that "all the reformed Churches....are of our confession in doctrine".<sup>35</sup> Clearly Hooker, although he had points of disagreement with Calvin, nevertheless did not detect any substantial doctrinal irregularities between them. Indeed, it is more than likely that Hooker would have accepted Bishop Jewel's assessment of the English Reformation. Jewel was convinced that the Church of England's doctrinal position was in complete agreement with both the Swiss and French churches. He wrote enthusiastically to Peter Martyr that "we do not differ from your doctrine by a nail's breath" whilst Bishop Horn could write to Bullinger that "we have throughout England the same ecclesiastical doctrine as yourselves".<sup>36</sup> Hooker simply agreed. According



to Hooker, the Reformed churches, which included the Church of England, were united on an agreed doctrinal platform.

Moreover, Hooker asserts, not only was the Church of England one of the Reformed churches but he had also personally embraced the truths of the Reformation with a sound heart and mind. Writing in the Preface to the *Laws* Hooker pleads,

"Thinke not that you reade the words of one, who bendeth himself as an adversarie against the truth which you have already embraced; but the wordes of one, who desireth even to embrace together with you the selfe same truth, if it be the truth, and for that cause (for no other God he knoweth) hath undertaken the burthensome labour of this painefull kinde of conference."<sup>37</sup>

Hooker's stated and expressed aim then is not, as others have suggested, to use a sleight of hand, pretending to be a Reformed theologian whilst all the time secretly attempting to undermine the Reformed position. Although many have understood Hooker in this way, Hooker himself, almost realising that he might be so misconstrued, is anxious to be treated with integrity. "It is no part of my secret meaning", he insists, "to draw you hereby into hatred or to set upon the face of this cause any fairer glasse... but my whole endeavour is to resolve the conscience". The task that faced Hooker was to prove to the Disciplinarians that his position was in fact wholly consistent with a mutually accepted orthodoxy. This was crucial to Hooker's case for he realised that the Puritan conscience could be healed only if it could be persuaded that the position of the established church was fully compatible with Reformed doctrine.<sup>38</sup> Consequently Hooker's

aim was, first of all, to demonstrate the church's commitment to Reformed theology and to argue that this was his commitment as well.

To be sure, there have been a small group of writers on Hooker who have consistently maintained this position even though it flies in the face of most Hooker scholarship.<sup>39</sup> Philip Hughes for example, in one of those rare books that actually attempts to study Hooker's theological dependence on the earlier English Reformers, concluded that it was Hooker who, "in classical manner, concludes the line and confirms the position of the reformed Anglicanism of the sixteenth century".<sup>40</sup> The position adopted by Hughes *et al* is a minority position but, in the light of what has already been said, it deserves more careful analysis. It is certainly the supposition of this thesis that Hooker's relationship to the Reformation has been misrepresented but in order to prove this we shall need to examine a number of issues.

As is well known, there lay at the heart of the Conformist-Puritan debate lay a complex of issues that all related to the proper and necessary degree of power to be ceded to the various sources of authority in the theological endeavour. As we shall see, the Puritans were convinced that only Scripture was to be invested with any authority and Reason and Tradition could be either downplayed or, preferably, ignored. As we have already noted, especially in Grislis' survey of Hooker scholarship, Hooker's use of Reason is that element within his thought that is largely seen as that which most distances him from an explicitly Reformed theology. However, it is possible to argue that Hooker's use

of Reason is wholly compatible with Reformed orthodoxy and, if this argument stands, so it becomes preferable to regard Hooker as standing in direct continuity with the Reformation.<sup>41</sup> But if this can be successfully argued it raises even more pressing concerns. For if it is true that Hooker's use of Reason is that which is both most distinctive about his theology, and is also that which most distances him from the Reformation, and yet it can still be shown to occupy the same general theological ground as the Reformers, then two results immediately follow. Firstly, it should be possible to demonstrate that if Hooker's views on Reason are largely compatible with an explicit Reformed orthodoxy then it might also be possible to argue that the same holds true with his views on Tradition and Scripture. Secondly, if this can be proven, then the central loci of theological authority in Hooker is essentially that which was held by all the Reformers, which should, at the very least, suggest not only that Hooker was more indebted to the Reformation than has hitherto be accepted but is, in fact, to be considered one of the Reformed divines of the sixteenth century English church.

Such is the main contention of this thesis. We shall, first all, be examining Hooker's use of Reason before investigating his use of Tradition and Scripture. In this investigation we shall use essentially the same format in each chapter. First of all we shall research the Puritans' attitudes to Reason, Tradition or Scripture as it was championed either by the anonymous authors of *A Christian Letter* by Thomas Cartwright before proceeding to examine Hooker's approach.<sup>42</sup> Having done this we shall be on advantageous ground in order to assess the Reformation's understanding of Reason, Tradition and Scripture, so

helping us to determine where Hooker fits into the overall pattern. This will be accomplished by looking closely at two magisterial continental Reformers, namely, Luther and Calvin.<sup>43</sup> Each chapter will then conclude with a brief look at how Hooker scholarship has handled Hooker's treatment of Reason, Tradition and Scripture which might help in providing a corrective as well as pointing out new avenues of research and reassessment.

## Chapter Two

### Richard Hooker and the Authority of Reason

#### 2.1 *Introduction*

When we come to examine Richard Hooker's defence of Reason we are approaching that aspect of Hooker's theology that has commonly been seen as the element within his thought that is not only the most distinctive but that has also had a profound influence upon Anglican theology.<sup>1</sup> It is widely recognised that it was Hooker who first advanced within the post-reformation English Church the use of Reason as an essential ingredient in order to act as a counterpoise to Calvinism's appeal to scripture and Rome's appeal to tradition.<sup>2</sup> This however has created a distinct set of problems for those who wish to understand, not only Hooker's relationship with reformed orthodoxy represented by the continental reformers Luther and Calvin, but also the inner coherence and logic of Hooker's own thought. Firstly Hooker's determination to allow the use of Reason a significant role within the developing structure of his theology is seen as that which most distances him from the Reformed continental theologians. As we have seen this is not only the charge made against Hooker by the anonymous authors of *A Christian Letter* it has become the common staple of most Hooker scholarship ever since. That this flies in the face of Hooker's own claim that it is the Disciplinarians who have abandoned the high ground of Reformed theology that he is seeking to uphold has been largely overlooked. Secondly, if it is true that Hooker's defence of Reason is that which not only

gives him a unique voice but is also characteristic of Anglican theology, then it is surely disquieting to discover that two such eminent Hooker scholars such as Gunnar Hillerdal and Peter Munz have taken such radically differing positions with regard to Hooker's use of Reason. For Hillerdal Hooker's work is a "philosophical failure" due to the fact that although Reason is supposed to clarify Revelation it cannot operate without the quickening power of God so that in the final analysis Hooker is forced to concede that everything must be understood in the light of Revelation; causing a collapse into fideism.<sup>3</sup> Peter Munz, on the other hand, argues that Hooker is a rationalist because he holds to the view that Reason can discover everything that exists and is valid; thus breaking down the distinction between faith and Reason as mutually complementary methods for discovering divine and natural law. Hooker therefore is in the end forced to establish the "complete autonomy of human reason over the whole of life."<sup>4</sup>

This chapter will argue that the two problems outlined above are inextricably related and for one major reason. For what much Hooker scholarship has overlooked is precisely that which causes such differences of opinion between Hillerdal and Munz. Both those who seek to distance Hooker unduly from the Reformed consensus and also those who wish to argue that Hooker is either a rationalist or a fideist have failed to take into account an understanding and appreciation of the doctrine of the two realms or the two kingdoms.<sup>5</sup> A proper understanding of this will not only show Hooker's adherence to the theological first principles of the Reformation, it will also demonstrate the close harmony between Reason and Revelation; a position very close to Hooker's own

heart as he was constantly criticising those who were seeking to fragment, not only the close harmony and relationship that exists between Scripture and Reason, but also between Scripture and Tradition.

In order to clarify this therefore, we shall need to examine five main issues. Firstly we shall investigate what the Puritan feared most in Hooker's use of Reason. In so doing we shall be forced, secondly, to examine the wider philosophical background provided by the continental Renaissance and this will be achieved by taking a close look at Erasmus. Having done this we shall, thirdly, examine Hooker's approach to Reason before, fourthly, examining the two continental Reformers held in such regard by the Puritans namely, Martin Luther and John Calvin. We shall then be in a position to ascertain whether Hooker's understanding of Reason was more indebted to Renaissance humanism or to the Reformation and so we shall be able to ascertain whether Hooker's understanding was in point of fact more at variance with the continental Reformers or with his Puritan opponents. Finally we shall then be in a commanding position to be able to evaluate the arguments of two Hooker scholars Gunnar Hillerdal and Peter Munz. This should then enable us to see if Hooker on this point has been misrepresented in the past as well as pointing out possible corrections and further lines of enquiry.

## 2.2 *The Puritans and Reason*

It is certainly a major contention of the anonymous authors of *A Christian Letter* that Hooker's *Lawes* represent a major departure from the theological position hammered out by the English and continental Reformers.<sup>6</sup> The *Letter* opens with the authors declaring themselves to be the true inheritors of the Reformation spirit. They claim to be "English Protestantes" and "unfayned favourers of the present state of religion, authorised and professed" within the English Church. The letter is addressed to Richard Hooker because the authors required "resolution in certayne matters of doctrine" which to them seemed "to overthrowe the foundation of Christian Religion, and of the Church among us".<sup>7</sup> The methodology employed by *A Christian Letter* was to compare Hooker's theological position with the Articles of Religion and to try and indicate discrepancies wherever they could be found.<sup>8</sup> In this way they hoped to be able to prove that Hooker was adopting a theological position very different from that received by the best of the Reformed churches. The theological stakes were high, for according to the Puritans Hooker was seeking "covertlie and underhand" to bend all his skill and force against the Reformed English Church, and he was seeking to do so under the guise of defending episcopacy. Thus, although Hooker could retort that he was the one defending "the present state of religion, authorized and professed in England" that had chosen to maintain episcopacy, such an argument was a superficial one. For the Puritans were convinced that behind Hooker's defence of "the present state of religion" lurked



an agenda of such magnitude that it was "to make questionable and bring in contempt the doctrine and faith itself".<sup>9</sup>

This reading of *A Christian Letter* is borne out by the points that its authors chose to raise. The *Letter* demands that Hooker clarify his position on some twenty-one substantial points of systematic theology and it can be safely said that they expose the heart of Reformed theology. Beginning with some general systematic points of Trinitarian and Christological interest the authors rapidly move into the vexed question of scriptural authority before turning their attention to questions of soteriology; the relationship between faith and works, predestination and so on.<sup>10</sup> They conclude with ecclesiological concerns namely preaching, ministerial authority and sacramental theology before discussing "speculative doctrine", Calvin's relationship to the other Reformed churches, "Schoolemen, Philosophie, and Poperie" and concluding with remarks on Hooker's literary style which they cannot refrain from pointing out is "nothing after the frame of the writings.....of Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Jewel, Whitgeeft, Fox, Fulke, etc".<sup>11</sup> Running as a common theme throughout many of the points however is the complaint most clearly articulated under point twenty "Schoolemen, Philosophie, and Poperie". It is here that Puritan anxieties are most clearly expressed, for by linking together "schoolemen, philosophie and poperie" Hooker's adversaries were placing their finger on what they perceived to lie at the heart of the problem. As we shall see the continental Reformers were unanimous in their rejection of medieval scholasticism because it had become corrupted by a dependence upon Aristotle. Furthermore they were unanimous in

their rejection because it failed to take seriously the doctrine of the fall and the curtailment of the power of Reason. To make matters worse, this edifice of scholasticism and philosophy was what the Reformers felt had led to the corruption of the Church and that corruption could best be described as "poperie". Consequently when the authors of the *Letter* write that,

"..in all your bookes, although we finde many good things bravelie handled, yet in all your discourse, for the most part, Aristotle the patriarch of Philosophers (with divers human writers) and the ingeneous schoolemen, almost in all points have some finger; Reason is highlie sett up against holie scripture.."

they are tarring Hooker with as black a brush as they could find.<sup>12</sup> By linking Hooker with medieval scholasticism, philosophy and the Church of Rome they are portraying him as an obstinate opponent of the Reformation who is attempting to set the clock back by "shaking" and "contradicting almost all the principall pointes of our English creede."<sup>13</sup>

This is a serious charge. But on what basis were Hooker's detractors making such an assertion? According to the Puritans Hooker was a "prive and subtill enemie to the whole state of the Englishe Church" because he had a benign view of the Fall and was therefore most susceptible to the errors of Rome.<sup>14</sup> In his debate with the Puritan Walter Travers, Hooker had incensed his opponent by claiming that his best authority in disputed matters of doctrine was his own reason.<sup>15</sup> This signalled, to the Puritan mind, a different doctrine of man and so, for them, it was not surprising that Hooker displayed a cavalier attitude to the scriptures. They alleged that because Hooker inferred "that the light of nature teacheth some knowledge naturall whiche is necessarie to salvation" then

the scriptures can be regarded merely as a "supplement and making perfect" of that knowledge already given within the realm of nature.<sup>16</sup> This inevitably leads to a high view of the Church (point four), Pelagianism (point five), an erroneous view of the relationship between faith and works (points six, seven, and eight), a false understanding of sin's radical nature (point nine), a confused understanding of predestination (point ten) and peculiar views on ecclesiological matters (points eleven and thirteen). Taking all these points together the purpose of *A Christian Letter* is to undermine Hooker's standing as a Reformed divine and thus indicate his radical departure from the position of the Church of England. In short the onus of proof is placed upon Hooker to show how his "wordes in divers thinges do agree with the doctrine established among us."<sup>17</sup>

From what has been argued already it is clear that most Hooker scholarship has agreed with the basic assessment of Hooker's theology made by the authors of *A Christian Letter* notwithstanding Hooker's pleas to the contrary. But in order to proceed further we shall need to unravel two closely related and intimately connected issues. On the one hand we have been confronted with the Puritan argument that in Hooker's theology "reason is highlie sett up against holy scripture" and on the other hand we have noted Hooker's protestations to the contrary. Both the Puritans and Hooker need to be taken seriously because behind their several positions lie fruitful areas of theological discussion that focus upon the role that is to be ceded to Reason in theological endeavour. Behind the Puritan's accusation is the fear that Hooker had been seduced by the humanistic and Renaissance emphasis on the power and ability of autonomous Reason.

Certainly, as has already been mentioned, the Puritan impression that Hooker taught that the "light of nature teacheth some knowledge naturall whiche is necessarie to salvation" would incline Hooker's opponents to the view that he had succumbed to "the devil's bride"; the term Luther was fond of using for Reason.<sup>18</sup> But what exactly did Hooker mean when he said that the light of nature taught some "knowledge naturall whiche is necessarie to salvation"? This is an important question and one that needs to be resolved, for it could so easily be construed to mean (as the Puritan interpretation demonstrates) that nature could provide some part of the "supernaturall necessarye truth" without which it would be impossible to be saved; in which case Puritan fears would be justified. Given the historical and theological context of the time it is easy to see how Hooker's Puritan detractors would have immediately assumed that Hooker was in fact making this precise point and, in so doing, leaning too heavily for support on the humanistic arm of Erasmus. Our argument, however, is that Hooker is making a careful distinction between "knowledge naturall" on the one hand and "supernaturall necessary truth" on the other. The exact relationship between these two spheres of knowledge is of necessity complex and it lies at the heart of much misunderstanding of Hooker. In order to try and clarify this issue therefore we shall need to look at the broader theological context in which Hooker was working. Our immediate and initial concern will be to look at the position so feared by the Puritans, namely Erasmianism. This will then provide us with a tool with which to investigate the use of Reason in Hooker before turning to examine the use of Reason in Calvin and Luther. Having completed this we can turn to Hooker and see if in fact his theology on this matter is

compatible with theirs or whether the Puritan assessment of his work is in fact correct.

### 2.3 *Erasmus and Reason*

When in his latter years Erasmus came to contemplate the effects that the Reformation had on Europe he was consistent in his view that it was the most terrible tragedy.<sup>19</sup> Erasmus used to refer to the "stupid and pernicious tragedy" that was introduced by the reformers and his subtle and complex mind abhorred the "odious dissensions" that the reform had introduced.<sup>20</sup> That Erasmus eventually came to this view is somewhat surprising given that fact that in his early years he had been doing his unwearying best to help on the reformation within the church. Like Luther Erasmus was appalled by the ostentation of the papal court and although in his visit to Rome he was welcomed and feted as the most learned man in Europe and given free access to libraries, he never forget the sight of pope Julius II entering Bologna as a conquering Caesar. For Erasmus, as for Luther, such shocking denials of apostolic simplicity were a far cry from the New Testament ideal and Erasmus took up his pen. The result was *The Praise of Folly*, a biting satiric work dedicated to Sir Thomas More. It was, in many ways, a searing attack on Papal abuse of power. "Now as to the Popes of Rome," Erasmus writes,

"who pretend themselves Christ's vicars, if they would but imitate his exemplary life, in the being employed in an unintermitted course of preaching. In the being attended with poverty, nakedness, hunger, and a contempt of this world; if they did but consider the import of the word pope, which signifies a father; or if they did but practice their surname of most holy, what order or degrees of men would be in a worse condition? There would be then no such vigorous making of parties, and buying of

votes, in the conclave upon a vacancy of that see.... All their riches, all their honour, their jurisdictions, their Peter's patrimony, their offices, their dispensations, their licences, their indulgences, their long train and attendants...in a word all their prerequisites would be forfeited and lost; and in their room would succeed watchings, fastings, tears, prayers, sermons, hard studies, repenting sighs, and a thousand such like severe penalties."<sup>21</sup>

With writing of this kind it was almost inevitable that not only would Erasmus begin to make enemies for himself but that also Luther and Erasmus would be drawn together. Certainly Melanchthon was eager to write to Erasmus informing him that "Martin Luther is your convinced admirer and would like your approval".<sup>22</sup> As the joint repercussions of *The Praise of Folly* and the *Ninety-Five Theses* began to be felt many were convinced that Erasmus was the father of the Lutheran heresy. Aleander, the Papal envoy at the Imperial Diet at Worms, in a dispatch to Rome dated as late as 1521, was still convinced that Erasmus was "the great cornerstone of the Lutheran heresy."<sup>23</sup> But there was more. When, in 1516, Erasmus' *Novum Instrumentum* (later called the *Novum Testamentum*) began to pour off Froben's presses together with their daringly outspoken annotations and paraphrases that did not hesitate to signal the Church's departures from primitive Christianity, it seemed to all the world that Erasmus and Luther together would be able to dismantle the Church. As soon as the *Novum Testamentum* was published it was seized upon by Luther who promptly made it the basis for his course of lectures that he was giving at Wittenburg on the Epistle to the Romans. On this level Luther and the Humanists were entirely at one as both recognised that the key to the reform of the Church had to be based on as informed an understanding of the basic texts as possible. But all this was soon to change. The similarities between Erasmus and Luther,

between the Humanist and the Reformer, had at first seemed so close that they blinded everyone, including themselves, to their essential differences. By the early 1520's however, Erasmus was beginning to be pulled in the opposite direction. In the September of 1524 Erasmus sensed that the rift had come. He wrote to Henry VIII: "The die is cast. The little book on free will has seen the light of day."<sup>24</sup>

The *Diatribes seu collatio de libero arbitrio* or the *Essay on Free Will*, an elegant and graceful piece of work met with a passionate response from Luther who published in December of 1525 *De Servo Arbitrio* or *The Bondage of the Will*. In these two pieces of work there stands revealed essentially two differing conceptions and understandings of Christianity.<sup>25</sup> To be sure there was much on which both Erasmus and the reformers could agree but at the heart of their respective analyses lay profound issues of disagreement. Their whole approach to the problems afflicting the late medieval Church took place on two altogether different planes. Whilst Luther approached the whole issue theologically, treating the abuses in the Church as fundamental issues of truth, Erasmus was content to avoid serious doctrinal disputes. This method of proceeding, according to Luther, never went deeply enough and utterly failed to address the underlying issues. For example, whilst both Luther and Erasmus repudiated the medieval schoolmen they did so for entirely different reasons. According to Luther and the reformers in general, the scholastic theologians, particularly Duns Scotus and Occam, had so distorted the gospel by minimising the power of evil and virtually doing away with any conception of original sin

that there was little incentive for man to turn wholeheartedly to Christ for salvation. Thus, on this understanding it is clear that the whole problem for Luther is essentially theological, embracing the cardinal christian doctrines of Christology, Sin, Redemption, Man and God. It was on this level that Luther operated and worked and accordingly Luther felt that it was because the Church's doctrine had become so corrupt and distorted that it inevitably and naturally led to a corruption in both manners and life. For Erasmus however the issue was never really treated as primarily theological. Naturally theological issues were involved but Erasmus was convinced that the situation could be remedied by a simple return to apostolic simplicity; and in order to achieve this one needed nothing more than to be bold enough to point out the abuses so prevalent in the Church. Erasmus was convinced that mere reason could enlighten anyone who cared to look that the Gospel did not require the absurd superstitious practices so insisted upon by the Church. Thus, in his *Enchiridion* Erasmus makes a passionate appeal for a basic return to simplicity of life but it is noteworthy that the basis of his call is not grounded theologically. Erasmus could not see that which Luther so clearly saw, namely that there was an organic relationship between doctrine and morality. For the reformers it was insisted that it was because the Church's doctrine had become so distorted that its moral and ethical life was in such disarray. But this point was one that Erasmus was either reluctant or unable to make. Writing to the Rector of the University of Louvain Erasmus admits his distaste of theological controversy and confesses that he is not the man for the job.<sup>26</sup> Even whilst a student studying the schoolmen his major aversion to them was not that they darkened theological knowledge but



that their Latin was so bad. Later on he was to admit to the taunt that he was merely a grammarian but as that was the case why should others rail against him for not entering the lists as a theological opponent of the Reformation? Clearly Erasmus recognised that the reformers had to be answered theologically but that he was not the man to do so. There seems to have been an almost total aversion on the part of Erasmus to begin even to treat Luther as a theological opponent. Writing in 1520 Erasmus confesses that "of all of Luther's books I have read less than a dozen pages, and those here and there; and yet out of these, skimmed through rather than read..."<sup>27</sup>

It is here that we are better able to understand the major difference between Erasmus and the humanism that he espoused and the reformers and the theology that they proposed. Firstly whilst agreeing with Luther that the Church was in desperate need of reform, Erasmus felt that this could best be achieved by a simple cutting away of excess fat and that there was no need for a complete reshaping of the Church's theological contours. According to Erasmus apostolic simplicity did not *ipso facto* rest upon apostolic doctrine. In fact Erasmus held that matters of doctrine were comparatively unimportant. Even in his *Essay on Free Will* Erasmus tells us that he is writing more as a commentator and critic rather than as engaged theologian discussing the truths of God.<sup>28</sup> As we have seen although Erasmus hated the Schoolmen almost as much as the reformers it was not because of their theology but because of their "barbarism". Erasmus' major point seems to be that doctrinal issues are irrelevant and that the reformers are placing too much stress on issues that should better be left

untouched. In taking this approach however the great humanist utterly failed to see that what was at stake for the reformers was nothing less than the essential truths of the gospel, without which the Church could not survive. As far as they were concerned it was absolutely vital to spearhead their attack on a doctrinal basis and hence they insisted, over and over again, that man's will was corrupt and totally "bound" and unable, in matters of salvation, to produce any meritorious good work that might contribute to salvation.

#### 2.4 *Hooker and Reason*

If, as has been argued above, the rift between the continental reformer and Erasmus foundered on the humanist's inability to address the developing situation theologically, this certainly is not an accusation that could be levelled at Hooker. Hooker was above all a theologian and he confronted the issues that came before him on a theological basis.<sup>29</sup> To be sure, Hooker was indebted, as all the reformers were to humanistic scholarship and endeavour but whilst he was indebted to them he used their scholarship in furthering his theological convictions; a practice employed by all the reformers. In this sense it is proper and correct to call Hooker "a God-centred Humanist: that is, one who, while allowing due importance and scope to the human faculties of reason and the moral sense, yet never loses sight of the final orientation of man toward God."<sup>30</sup> However, it is to be noticed that the term employed by Basil Willey as Hooker being "a God-centred Humanist" distinctly places the emphasis on Hooker's

theological orientation (it is "God-centred") and this being the case it is also a term that could with equal validity be applied to Luther and Calvin.

Nevertheless, Hooker's opponents remained convinced that he was placing too much stress upon the humanist impulse and not enough on theological "God-centredness". They highlighted, for example, in point three of the *Christian Letter*, Hooker's inference that "the light of nature teacheth some knowledge naturall whiche is necessarie to salvation" and this emphasis greatly disturbed the authors of the *Letter* because it implied that the truths of God were not in and of themselves separate, holy, and distinct from the common stuff of the world but were rather resting (and in some respects dependent) upon natural human ability. Ever concerned to stress the aseity, sovereignty and glory of God what they perceived to be Hooker's emphasis lay too much stress on the human and so could only serve to detract from the glory due to God and to place, at least some, of the glory, on the power and ability of man. At the centre of the puritan-conformist controversy then lies the complex theological issue of the exact relationship that exists between man's natural and innate knowledge of God and the Divine will as expressed in creation, and the supernatural knowledge of God that man can only discover through the means of special revelation. What Hooker needed to do then, was to define and delimit the different types and different spheres of law in order to avoid the confusion which springs from attempting to measure all man's knowledge by the one or by the other. Hooker tackles this precise issue head on in Book One of the *Lawes* and as Book One is

the book most often used to demonstrate Hooker's "humanism" we shall need to look at Book One in some detail.

Hooker opens his discussion by reminding his readers that those who are wishing to uphold the then current position and discipline of the Church of England "are accused as men that will not have Christ to rule over them" and so have "wilfully cast his statutes behinde their backs, hating to be reformed, and made subject unto the scepter of his discipline."<sup>31</sup> Because the Church's "rites, customs, and orders of Ecclesiasticall government" were under severe attack it was essential for Hooker to "offer the lawes by which we live unto the generall trial and judgement of the whole world".<sup>32</sup> By adopting this course Hooker was attempting to place the whole controversy in the context of God's working throughout the whole of creation. By doing so Hooker was able to demonstrate that scriptural laws functioned in a wider context and that it was essential, if they were to be properly understood, to understand their relationship to the other laws of God.

Accordingly, Hooker argues, the whole universe is governed by a hierarchy of laws. Each of these laws is of a different nature and they relate to the differing aspects of creation so that each type of creature was governed by a set of laws proportionable and appropriate to the demands and the limits of its own nature. This was true and applied even unto God who operated according to the law eternal although Hooker was quick to point out that this did not in any way hinder the freedom of God since the imposition of this law upon himself was

entirely his own free and voluntary act. In this sense God was like and yet unlike the rest of his creation. He was like the rest of creation in that he worked as the rest of creation did according to law and yet he was unlike the rest of creation because the law by which God worked was not imposed upon him by superior authority but was merely "that order by which God before all ages hath set down within himselfe, for himselfe, to do all things by".<sup>33</sup>

Naturally, it was important for Hooker to make this point if the rest of his argument was going to stick. Hooker needed to reiterate over and over again that God's eternal law over his creation was mediated through a series of laws and these laws were grounded in God's own nature and character. It was part of God's nature to work in an orderly and reasonable way and consequently it should not come as any surprise to discover that God's own creation also worked in an orderly and reasonable way especially if it is remembered that nature is God's own instrument. Hooker puts it rhetorically: "Who [is] the guide of nature but only the God of nature?"; and as nature's guide the law "aeternall receyveth according unto the different kinds of things which are subject unto it different and sundry kinds of names".<sup>34</sup> Consequently that part of God's law which orders nature Hooker call "natures law". That part which orders and controls angels

"coelestiall and heavenly: the law of reason that which bindeth creatures reasonable in this world, and with which by reason they may perceive themselves to be bound; that which bindeth them, and is not knowen but by speciall revelation from God, Divine law; humane law that which out of the either of reason or of God, men probablie gathering to be expedient, they make it a law."<sup>35</sup>

Hooker has now identified the varying hierarchies of law and relatively speaking these are simple and straightforward. Nature's law is the law which each created

thing keeps "unwittingly", almost automatically, such as the "heavens and elements of the world, which can do no otherwise than they doe." Similarly, celestial law, binds and controls the angels of heaven, who because they live in such close proximity to God, "they all adore him; and being rapt with the love of his beauty they cleave inseparably for ever unto him."<sup>36</sup> Nature's law and celestial law therefore govern the created and heavenly worlds but in both these cases there is, on the whole, unqualified obedience. As we have seen Hooker argued that nature kept her course "unwittingly" whilst the angels, although "voluntary agents" with an "intellectual nature" similar to man's, live in such close proximity to God that rebellion is deemed to be highly unlikely. But with mankind the situation is entirely different and more complex.

This complexity can be noted, first of all, by the different laws that apply to man and Hooker points to at least three varying types of law, namely the law of reason, divine law and human law. But why should this be the case? It is the case, Hooker maintains, because all these differing laws point to the various ends to which each creature was being led. Man as man is a complex animal. As a creature living in this world he is subject, as other creatures are, to the law of nature. But this alone cannot exhaust the final end for which he was created. He is also, Hooker reminds us, a voluntary and intellectual creature, much as the angels are, and as such there is a certain freedom given to man which is denied other natural agents who can only "worke by simple necessity". Moreover, man is also created "according to the likeness of his maker" and therefore stands in a unique position in relation to God. Endued with the gift of reason, God expects

man to employ this gift in order to frame laws that reason tells him need to be obeyed. Hooker insists however that these laws of reason can be discovered without the "helpe of revelation supernaturall and divine."<sup>37</sup> The law of reason is not extended "as to conteine in it all maner lawes whereunto resonable creatures are bound".<sup>38</sup> A further law exists, a law supernatural and divine, that pertains to man's spiritual nature created as he in is in the image of God. As God's image bearer man desires spiritual perfection but this perfection cannot be achieved without supernatural revelation for this "exceedeth the reach of sense" and is "somewhat above capacitie of reason".<sup>39</sup> It is here that scripture comes into play, pointing out the road that man must take if he is to be saved everlastingly. All the other laws cannot reveal and disclose this spiritual end of the life of man.

Hooker has now demonstrated the various laws by which man operates and he has also shown that these laws have their origin in God. Because this is the case it cannot be right for the puritans to insist that man can only obey God when he is specifically acting in response to biblical law. Divine law has a divine end and purpose. It was given for a particular reason, just as other laws were given for particular ends and specific reasons. Man is not just a spiritual being. He is also a physical, reasonable and voluntary agent and these different aspects of his nature necessitate differing types of law. But having made this point Hooker nevertheless concedes the point that even without supernatural and divine law man can still discover, through the use of his reason, something of life's spiritual end so that even the pagans know something of God. It is at this point that Hooker's "humanism" reveals itself most clearly.

Given Hooker's polemical purpose to show that man could obey the varying laws of the created order without automatically thereby displeasing God, it could only strengthen his case if he could point to worthy pagans who, without the benefit of divine law, were nevertheless able to discover things about God. And this is what Hooker is able to prove quite readily by employing the concept of potentiality, linking it to his hierarchy of laws and duly applying it to the created order. Naturally God is not part of this process as he "cannot be that which now he is not" because God already "actually and everlastingly is whatsoever he may be" and therefore "cannot hereafter be that which now he is not."<sup>40</sup> But whilst God cannot be unrealised potential creation certainly is: hence the need for the hierarchical structure of universal law to lead the creation onward to its appointed ends. "All things", argues Hooker, "are somewhat in possibility, which as yet they are not in act. And for this cause there is in all things an appetite or desire, whereby they incline to something which they may be."<sup>41</sup> The whole of creation then is straining and, to use a Pauline phrase, travailing for an ever closer union with God and this finds its most acute expression in the life of man, heathen or Christian. "This is not only knowne to us", continues Hooker, "who [Christ] himselfe hath so instructed, but even they do acknowledge, who amongst men are not judged the nearest unto him."<sup>42</sup> Hooker then alludes to Plato and Mercurius Trismegistus who had both defined the aim of man to be participation in the life of God.



In making this point Hooker is merely attempting to prove that the natural law of reason is able to discern a great deal; and this without the need of special revelation but purely from the light of natural discourse. Not only can the law of reason attain to the knowledge of the divine existence, it can also from this point deduce other laws. If God exists then it is the duty of man to worship him, to love him, to pray to him and to acknowledge one's dependence upon him in all areas of life. Indeed, the first commandment on which Jesus said hung all the law and the prophets, namely the law to love the Lord God with all one's heart, soul, mind and strength is itself a commandment discoverable by the pagan and unregenerate mind. But what then of the second commandment to love one's neighbour as oneself? Even this, contends Hooker, is discoverable by mere "natural inducement."<sup>43</sup> Accordingly there is provided a natural way to discover the mind and will of God without the aid of supernatural revelation, and it cannot possibly, therefore, be maintained that by obeying these natural dictates of reason man does injury to the power and wisdom of the special revelation that God does see fit to provide through the scriptures. For the scriptures are not the only law provided by God for man to use.

Many commentators on Hooker have made much of the power and ability that Hooker cedes to reason. As has already been mentioned it is this power that is sometimes seen to distance Hooker most profoundly from the reformation but one must exercise care in making this point. It is true that Hooker elevates reason, almost exalting it into an independent source of revelation, but what exactly does this use of reason amount to? On the one hand

it could be argued that it amounts to a great deal. It tell man that there is a God, he is to be worshipped and adored and it also informs him of his duty to his fellow men. This is no small achievement for it lies at the heart, as Hooker pointed out, of the Law and the Prophets. But beyond this point it could not go. Hooker has already warned that the law of reason did not "contein all maner lawes whereunto reasonable creatures are bound".<sup>44</sup> It did not have the ability, or the power to inform man about the way to eternal life. On the contrary, the path to which reason did point could only serve to make salvation forever unattainable for the "natural means...unto blessedness" logically pointed to "works".<sup>45</sup> But works were, in this sphere, corrupted by sin and could not aid man in his securing the gift of eternal life. "But examine the workes that we do", Hooker pleads, "and since the firste foundation of the world what one can say, My wayes are pure?".<sup>46</sup> And so the conclusion to which Hooker comes is that either there is no way unto salvation or, if there is, then it must be "a way supernaturall", a way that could never have entered into man's heart and that was utterly beyond his reason to conceive or imagine. And this "supernatuall way" is the way given to mankind by the gracious act of God in revealing his son Jesus Christ in the Holy Scriptures.

Hooker has now come to the end of his argument. Attacking the extreme biblicism of Calvin's followers Hooker has been trying to show that there is a close relationship between Grace and Nature, Reason and Revelation but that nevertheless, although this relationship is close, Grace and Nature, Reason and Revelation are not identical. They each have their proper spheres of

operation and influence and that an overemphasis on the one must not be allowed to distort the other. The sum of Hooker's argument can be distilled in two statements, namely that "when supernatural duties are necessarily exacted, natural are not rejected as needless"<sup>47</sup> and

"the benefite of natures light be thought excluded as unnecessarie, because the necessities of a diviner light is magnified."<sup>48</sup>

Such is Hooker's position. We must now examine whether it was consonant with the theology of the continental reformers.

## 2.5 *Martin Luther and Reason*

At first glance it might appear that it was the puritans who had a sure grasp of the reformed teaching on the use and ability of reason. In criticising Hooker for an over dependence on Aristotle the "patriarch of philosophers" the puritan party were echoing a theme that runs throughout Luther's fierce attacks on the capabilities of human reason. In Luther's view Aristotelian philosophy had conquered the theological schools in so decisive a manner that the philosopher was being used in order to cast light on the scriptures rather than allowing the supreme authority of the scriptures to judge and cast light on Aristotelian philosophy.<sup>49</sup> With this "father of the schoolmen" firmly entrenched, the place of Christ and the Scriptures had been usurped to such a radical extent that in studying Aristotle rather than scripture theologians were being blinded and led into deeper and greater darkness. Luther was horrified that the theological schools were not teaching Christ and St Paul but rather Aristotle and Averroes, and that amongst the Papists those considered greatest in theological

understanding were generally not those who could cite Scripture but rather were those most proficient in quoting a spiritually blind pagan who knew nothing about the eternal things of God.<sup>50</sup> Thus deceived and blinded, the theologians of the Church were in danger of snuffing out the light of the gospel, for in this mix of Christian theology and pagan philosophy the Church was in grave danger of seeming to provide an alternative path of salvation apart from the one established by Christ in the gospels. What was at stake for Luther at this point was none other than a cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith.

That this was the case was crystal clear to Luther and partly explains the violent, coarse and vulgar abuse that he heaps upon reason. Luther was implacably opposed to the ideal of rational autonomy and self-sufficiency in theology; the very ideal that was being sought by the philosophers and scholastic theologians. In order to come to Christ one had to eschew the wisdom of the world and embrace the simple gospel. Only in the scriptures could saving truth be found for it was only in the scriptures that Christ could be found. And yet despite this, or rather perhaps because of this, reason the "devil's bride...the lovely whore comes in and wants to be wise, and what she says, she thinks is the Holy Spirit".<sup>51</sup> Because of this deception men attend to other pretended sources of revelation apart from scripture and they end up worshipping whoredom and idolatry. Recalling the Old Testament prophets who preached against the Israelites chasing after idols under every green tree, Luther likewise compared the Roman Church led astray by the idle speculation of scholastic theologians who, by their endlessly fine and rational distinctions, corrupted the pure worship

of God. In the last sermon that Luther preached in Wittenburg on January 17th 1546 this is brought out with some force. Arguing that in worshipping God alone, the Father of the Lord Jesus, the reformers were worshipping God, not in the valleys or under the trees but in Jerusalem ("which is the place that God appointed for his worship") a vital truth had been regained, Luther then describes what "the comely bride, the wisdom of reason cooks up". She argues in such a way as to pervert the simplicity of the pure gospel and she does so by deceiving men into praying, not only to Christ but also to the saints, and to worship not only Christ but also Mary. She does so by pointing to the narrowness of the insistence that we should only serve Christ.

"What, us? Are we to worship only Christ? Indeed, shouldn't we also honour the only mother of Christ? She is the woman who bruised the head of the serpent. Hear us, Mary, for thy Son so honours thee that he can refuse thee nothing... So you have the picture of God as angry and Christ as judge; Mary shows to Christ her breast and Christ shows his wounds to the wrathful Father."<sup>52</sup>

According to Luther such a perverted view is inevitable once one leaves the path provided in the gospels and follows the ways provided by vain speculative reason. Seen in this context Luther heaps scorn and ridicule on reason's head. She is a "beast", an "enemy of God", and a "madam" often referred to as "Frau Hulda".<sup>53</sup>

Having said all this however, Luther is prepared in other passages to speak highly of reason's ability and of its essential goodness. He sees it as a gift of God who has given mankind reason which is "the head and substance of all things" and is something divine.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, it is reason that distinguishes man from all other living things. As such reason has great competence. Reason is the

source of light by which men can rule and administer the affairs of state. In an almost Hookerian phrase Luther writes that "reason is the soul of law and mistress of all laws" and elsewhere he argues that "all laws have been produced by the wisdom and reason of men".<sup>55</sup> As such reason is the source and bearer of human culture. The scope that Luther allows reason therefore is very wide indeed. Reason's ability is powerful enough to discover for itself art and science, medicine and law. Preaching on Ascension Day on Mark xvi. 14-20 Luther maintains that reason knows how to build houses, how to care for estates and land, and to lead conventionally decent and honest lives.<sup>56</sup> It is in this area, according to Luther, that reason is self-sufficient. Supernatural revelation is not necessary in order to teach the things that pertain to the temporal realm. In this area man is free to utilise his intelligence and rational ability in an almost unfettered way for in this, the mundane and everyday areas of life, reason has a legitimate sphere of competence. Furthermore, in this area of general knowledge and understanding Luther is even appreciative of Aristotle whose influence he so deplored in the theological schools.<sup>57</sup> Luther understood that both Aristotle and Plato had grasped great and valuable truths drawn from the "light of nature" that would be sheer barbarism for christians to ignore. Luther respected much of Aristotle's writing on ethics, for example, and felt that much of Aristotelian philosophy was grounded on sound argument.

The main contours of Luther's attitude towards reason might at first seem contradictory. As with Hooker, it is conceivable that one could argue, by an examination of all the passages in which the reformer attacks reason, that

Luther is irrational, that he despises and rejects reason. On the other hand one could also argue, with equal validity, that Luther is a rationalist because he allows reason such scope and movement over such a wide area. Both positions however would be mistaken, for what holds the two together in such dynamic tension is Luther's doctrine of the "two realms" or the "two kingdoms."<sup>58</sup>

Central to Luther's doctrine of man lies the conviction that the christian lives simultaneously in two realms. On the one hand human nature is utterly corrupt and totally incapable of saving itself. Arguing against Erasmus in *The Bondage of the Will* Luther denied again and again that man, because of his depravity, had any ability to do anything but to continue in sin.<sup>59</sup> The Fall meant that he had become, in Pauline terminology, dead in his trespasses and sins. So radical was the nature of the Fall that every aspect of man's being was affected so that no action of his could be counted as meritorious in the sense that it could contribute to the securing of his salvation. According to the reformers man was totally depraved; meaning by this that the totality of man's being, his body, his mind and his spirit was effected by the Fall. Because this was the case, reason, as utilised by the unregenerate man could not possibly begin to understand the gospel. Standing within the Earthly Kingdom reason could not begin to comprehend the gospel although there are some things about God that it could understand. Luther writes that "the natural light of reason reaches so far that it regards God as kind, gracious, merciful, tender-hearted."<sup>60</sup> But human, natural, and earthly reason cannot begin to fathom the deep mysteries of the Christian faith such as the incarnation, the resurrection, the deity of Christ and the Trinity.

Such things not only lie beyond reason's scope and ability, it is offended by them and so it arrogantly begins to dictate to God what He must do in order to secure the salvation of mankind. Such is natural, unregenerate reason standing on its own before the grace and power of God.

On the other hand the regenerate man does not only stand in the Earthly Kingdom. By the individual's participation in Christ's righteousness, imputed to him by grace and through faith, he is at one and the same time a member of the Heavenly Kingdom. In this Kingdom the power and ability of reason had to take a subservient role and bow to the authority of the scriptures, the only source of ultimate spiritual knowledge. Paradoxically, although it might therefore seem that Luther would not allow reason to have any scope within the spiritual realm this in fact is not the case. Having been translated by Christ's active obedience into the spiritual realm the Christian now perceives and understands things through the eyes of faith.<sup>61</sup> Consequently the motivating principle within the Christian is not natural reason acting autonomously and apart from revelation; rather it is faith that is now working in conjunction with reason and this is a significant theological point to grasp. Reason, as Luther had argued earlier, was the element within man that distinguished him from the rest of creation. This element although affected by the fall was not destroyed by the fall. It was still a property of man's make-up and he could no more jettison this aspect of his being than he could abandon the soul as a constituent part of his self. Reason within the unregenerate was autonomous, fleshly and man-centred. Although still present, the use to which it was put was an ungodly one. But just as the fall had



not destroyed reason within the unregenerate man so conversion did not obliterate the necessary use to which reason could be put within the life of the regenerate man. For although reason within the Heavenly Kingdom was subservient to revelation, it was now illuminated by faith. The main distinction is that whereas reason rules in the *regnum mundi* it cannot rule in the *regnum Christi* although it is called upon to serve there once it has been illuminated by faith.<sup>62</sup>

## 2.6 *John Calvin and Reason*

Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, although it had passed through various editions, reached its definitive stage in 1559 and reflects the mature and systematic thought of one of the reformation's leading thinkers. Like Luther he adopted the doctrine of the two kingdoms as his own. Indeed the opening sentence of Calvin's *magnum opus* reflects the same doctrinal position as the German reformer's. He had held this position consistently throughout the later editions of his work for in the 1536 edition Calvin's opening sentence claims that "the whole of sacred doctrine consists in these two parts: knowledge of God and of ourselves."<sup>63</sup> Similarly in the 1559 edition Calvin makes this same point. "Our wisdom", he writes, "in so far as it ought to be deemed true and solid wisdom consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves."<sup>64</sup> But it was not long before the theological problem that confronted Luther also confronted Calvin. It was an axiom of reformed soteriology, held both by both the reformers, that man's nature was so corrupt that salvation could

only come as a wholly unmerited, free and gracious act of God. In order to maintain this position man's fallenness had to be accentuated so as to leave no room for individual merit, for then salvation would not be "of God" but "of man". This naturally presented difficulties, and the difficulties centred around the doctrine of total corruption and the actuality of everyday life and experience where it could easily be manifested that man still demonstrated a great capacity for goodness. Calvin's discussion of reason highlights this problem most clearly and, as we shall see, his solution is found in the concept of "common grace"; a concept, in some important respects, similar to Luther's understanding of the *Zwei-Reiche* or Two Kingdoms.<sup>65</sup>

Calvin approaches his doctrine of common grace in book two and chapter three of the *Institutes*. It is noteworthy that Calvin is able to take up the doctrine of common grace in close connection with the doctrine of total corruption and depravity. Calvin is arguing that man's nature cannot produce anything worthy of commendation and praise. And this is true, he teaches, of man as a unified whole; it applies equally to the fleshly and sensual part of his nature as well as to the higher part of the soul. The whole of man is corrupt, fleshly and fallen and Calvin takes this position grounded on what he terms are the "epithets of Scripture".<sup>66</sup> According to Calvin the sustained and constant witness of Scripture points to the conclusion that "unlawful and depraved desires" are not only placed in the sensual part of man's nature but also lie within the mind itself. Referring to St Paul, Calvin points out that he draws "a picture of human nature which shows that there is no part in which it is not perverted and

corrupted."<sup>67</sup> Admittedly, not every sin is manifested in every man's life but this can be explained by a medical analogy. Just as a body may be sick because within it fosters and contains disease, even though no pain is felt, so a soul, teeming with the seeds of vice cannot be called sound even though the seeds never come to fruition.<sup>68</sup>

It is in this context in which Calvin takes up the difficulty arising from the fact that in every age there have been some who, under the guidance of nature, have all their lives been devoted to virtue. "Such examples", writes Calvin, "seem to warn us against supposing that the nature of man is utterly vicious, since, under [the guidance of nature], some have not only excelled in illustrious deeds, but conducted themselves most honourably through the whole course of their lives".<sup>69</sup> Clearly Calvin is on the horns of a dilemma. He can either deny the facts of experience and external evidence or he can weaken his doctrine of total corruption. But for Calvin another solution is possible. He points out that notwithstanding the corruption of human nature, divine grace is still at work. But this operative grace does not purify human nature; it merely lays it under "internal restraint". This being the case, men are hindered from pursuing their evil natures to their logical outcomes as described by St Paul in Romans chapter three. "If the Lord were to permit human passion to follow its bent" continues Calvin, "no ravenous beast would rush so furiously, no stream, however rapid and violent, so impetuously burst its banks."<sup>70</sup> Due to the limiting and controlling activity of God, man is constantly being held in check. This operative grace, it is important to realise, is not a purifying grace. It does not

operate in the same way as "special grace" within the hearts of the elect, purifying and sanctifying them. All this grace does is to "curb the perverseness of nature" and so effectually stopping it from "breaking forth into action."<sup>71</sup>

Calvin's discussion of the total corruption of human nature up until this juncture has looked at the problem of virtue and goodness in the lives of individuals in a negative light. In answer to the question "How is it, given your view of human nature, that men can still evidence lives devoted to virtue?" Calvin has initially responded by saying that God curbs men's passions so that they are unable to give full rein to their sinful desires. Whilst this may be true, it does not fully answer the question. Calvin realises this, and immediately proceeds to give a more positive view. He chooses as examples the rapacious and wicked Cataline and the good and virtuous Camillus. Calvin acknowledges that "we must either put Cataline on the same footing as Camillus" which would be an absurdity, as the one was so much more honourable than the other, or we have to concede that human nature is not, under careful cultivation, "wholly void of goodness".<sup>72</sup> But as this would endanger the doctrine of free and unmerited grace, Calvin dismisses it. A much clearer answer, he suggests, is that not only was grace at work, limiting the effects of evil but that God was also at work distributing "special gifts". Here Calvin acknowledges, like Luther, that man although fallen has not ceased to be man. He still possess marks of the divine image for again, as with Luther, Calvin agrees that the *imago dei* was not obliterated by the Fall. Earlier in Book Two Calvin had recognised that reason was one of the essential properties of mankind that served to distinguish him

from the lower animal kingdom. This gift, because it was a natural gift and thus an integral part of man's nature, could not be entirely destroyed. Calvin boldly writes, "to charge the intellect with perpetual blindness of any description whatever, is repugnance not only to the Word of God, but to common experience."<sup>73</sup>

Common experience and the Word of God then, are the grounds upon which Calvin is prepared to construct his understanding of reason. It cannot be denied that within the human mind there is implanted a desire to investigate the truth wherever it may be found. But, as with Luther, Calvin draws distinct limits around reason's ability to investigate what he terms as "superior objects". In this realm man is made aware of his limitations, especially as he attempts to soar above the sphere of this present life but provided he adheres to the realm in which reason is competent much good may be forth coming. Accordingly in "matters of policy and economy, all mechanical arts and liberal studies" reason may be usefully employed. In what begins to sound remarkably similar to Hooker, Calvin points out that as by nature man is a social animal he needs to regulate and cherish society. As no man is devoid of the "light of reason" it is not surprising to find that all human societies understand the need to regulate themselves by principles and laws, the seeds of which are naturally implanted without a teacher or lawgiver.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, in the realm of the liberal arts profane and pagan authors have demonstrated the admirable light of truth which should serve to remind us that although fallen and perverted, the human mind is still adorned and invested with admirable gifts that come from God. Having said all

this however, Calvin still maintains that in the heavenly realm man is blinder than a mole. Reason, in this kingdom is altogether stupid and worthless, unable of its own account, to do anything but stagger in the darkness. In order to solve this apparent paradox Calvin draws upon the fundamental distinction that underpins much reformed discussion on this matter. The distinction is this: "that we have one kind of intelligence of earthly things, and another of heavenly things. By earthly things", Calvin argues, "I mean those which relate not to God and his kingdom, to true righteousness and future blessedness, but have some connection with the present life, and are in a manner confined within its boundaries".<sup>75</sup>

In summary, the magisterial Reformers had a remarkably similar view and a common approach to the vexed question of reason and its authority. What united them was common grasp of the distinction between earthly and heavenly things and it was this pivotal doctrine that allowed them, on the one hand to acknowledge reason's power and ability, whilst at the same time leaving them free to stress man's corruption and fallenness and his utter dependence on the grace of God on the other. For both Luther and Calvin, corruption is related to the total act of man in turning from God in rebellion and sin but this does not mean that man is a complete and utter monster, a Cataline, nor does it mean, when viewing man's virtues, that the extent of man's depravity needs to be relativised. The magisterial reformers could insist upon total corruption and also allow reason great scope, power and ability.

## 2.7 Conclusion

Hooker writes at the conclusion of Book One of the *Lawes*, that he is aware that his "largeness of speech" may have been tedious to his readers.<sup>76</sup> He is not, however, unduly apologetic because he is convinced, as he had said in a sermon on Habbakuk 2:4, that "the want of an exact distinguishing" between "the way of grace" and "the way of nature" had been the "cause of the greatest part of that confusion whereof christianity at this daie laboureth."<sup>77</sup> In Book One Hooker defends himself against the accusation of "largeness of speech" by pointing out that he needed to take care

"to declare the different nature of lawes which severally concerne all men, from such as belong unto men either as civilly or spirituallly associated, such as pertaine to the fellowship which nations, or which Christian nations have amongst themselves, and in the last place such as concerning every or any of these, God himselfe hath revealed by his holy word; all serveth but to make manifest that as the actions of men are of sundry distinct kindes, so the laws therof must be accordingly be distinguished. There are in men operations some natural, some rationall, some supernatural, some politique, some finally Ecclesiastical. Which if we measure not ech by his own proper law, whereas the things themselves are so different; there will be in our understanding and judgement of them confusion."<sup>78</sup>

According to Hooker, the fundamental epistemological lapse made by his Puritan detractors was their failure to distinguish between the different nature of laws that pertain to men in their different associations, either "natural" or "spiritual". Moreover, Hooker was convinced that what united him with the major continental reformers and distanced him from the puritans was precisely this ability to distinguish between differing sorts of law. "Read my writings", Hooker pleads,

"with the same minde you reade Mr. Calvines writings, beare yourself as unpartiall in the one as in the other; imagine him to speake that which I

doe, lay aside your unindifferent minde, change but your spectacles, and I assure myselfe, that all will be cleerelie true, if he make difference as all men doe, which have in them this dexteritie of judgement betweene naturall and supernaturall trueth and lawes."<sup>79</sup>

This is not to say that the puritans were wrong in everything. They were correct, says Hooker, when they argued that God must be glorified in all things and that men's actions must therefore be framed after God's law, but wrong when they then go on to claim that the only way to glorify God is by obeying the one law that God has given men, namely the Scriptures. And they are wrong, Hooker goes on to state, because they do not distinguish between the natural works of men such as breathing, sleeping and moving when men set forth God's glory as "naturall agents" (obeying the general law of reason when men honour God as their Creator) and between the giving of glory to God as He is an "everlasting Saviour". It is only when we wish to glorify God as our Saviour and Redeemer that the special revelation contained in the Scriptures comes into play. In thus distinguishing between men's actions as they either "civilly or spiritually associated" Hooker is following almost exactly the pattern established by the major continental reformers and their understanding of the doctrine of the "two kingdoms." We shall now examine whether Hooker's understanding of reason and its ability, also takes its cue from reformed orthodoxy.

Hooker's most careful treatment of reformed orthodoxy is to be found in the *Dublin Fragments*.<sup>80</sup> Essentially these are unfinished tracts written in response to the accusations levelled against him by the authors of *A Christian Letter*. As we have seen, it was Hooker's intention to "resolve the conscience" of his opponents and in these tracts he is being very careful to underscore his



commitment to the high doctrinal principles of the reformation. We noted with both Luther and Calvin that the reformation insisted upon the radical nature of sin. This was inevitable, given that much debate between the reformer's and Rome was over the nature of a sinner's justification before a holy God. In his *Learned Discourse of Justification, Works and how the foundation of Faith is Overthrown* Hooker rehearses the traditional reformed objections to Rome's understanding of "the nature of the very essence of the medicine whereby Christ cureth our disease".<sup>81</sup> In both the *Dublin Fragments* and in the *Discourse* there are two sections that are worth quoting at some length for they show Hooker's commitment to reformed orthodoxy. In the *Dublin Fragments* Hooker elaborates on the enormity of human sin. He writes:

..sinne hath two measures whereby the greatnes thereof is judged. The object, God against whome: and the subject, that creature in whome sin is. By the one measure all sinne is infinit, because he is Infinite whome sinne offendeth: for which cause there is one eternall punishment due in justice to all sinners. In soe much that if it were possible for any creature to have been eternally with God, and coeternally sinfull, it standeth with justice by this measure to have punished that creature from eternitie past, noe lesse then to punish it into future eternitie.<sup>82</sup>

Hooker goes on to argue that although sin deserves everlasting punishment because it is the sin of a creature against an infinite God, nevertheless God in His mercy has provided a means of escape and does not leave us "in the hands of our own wills" as He had originally done with Adam. Here Hooker is suggesting that Adam had the power within himself either to sin or to abstain from sinning and this was because, before the fall, both Adam and Eve had "abilitie to stand of [their] own accord".<sup>83</sup> At that time they were most perfectly able to resist the snares of Satan because they had, as yet, not succumbed to sin and were therefore in a state of grace and moral perfection.

It is clear that the post-lapsarian situation is entirely different. Now that "abilitie" which had been Adam's was "altogether lost". Man was now in a state of slavery to sin. Whereas before Adam could have chosen either to sin or not to sin, post-lapsarian man could not help but sin continually. Through sin, Hooker elaborates,

our nature hath taken that disease and weaknes, whereby of itselfe it inclineth only unto evill. The natural powers and faculties therfore of mans minde are through our native corruption soe weakened and of themselves soe averse from God, that...they bring forth nothing in his sight acceptable, noe nott the blossoms or least budds that tend to the fruit of eternall life.<sup>84</sup>

This same point is again reiterated in Hooker's *Learned Discourse*. Underpinning the reformed insistence of total depravity Hooker realises that he may "seem somewhat extreme" but nevertheless, to make his point, asks his readers to imagine that God had asked them to produce one man in which righteousness could be found.

Search all the generations of men sithence the fall of your father Adam, find one man, that hath done any one action, which hath past from him pure, without any stain or blemish at all; and for that one man's only action, neither man nor angel shall feel the torments which are prepared for both: do you think that this ransom, to deliver man and angels, would be found among the sons of men? The best things we do have somewhat in them to be pardoned. How then can we do anything that is meritorious, and worthy to be rewarded?<sup>85</sup>

Indeed, Hooker goes on to elaborate, even the little fruit which we have by the exercise of Christian discipline and holiness is "corrupt and unsound".

Adopting such a reformed view of man's total depravity it is hardly surprising to find Hooker following the theological matrix supplied by the doctrine of the Two Kingdoms that limited reason's activity in the supernatural

realm.<sup>86</sup> Hooker insists that reason's ability in the Heavenly Kingdom is severely curtailed. "To finde out supernatural lawes, there is noe naturall way, because they have not their foundation in the course of nature," Hooker explains.<sup>87</sup> Drawing once again upon the Genesis narrative to argue his point, Hooker makes an important distinction between supernatural and natural law. Even Adam in paradise needed supernatural, divine revelation in order to inform him that to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was contrary to God's will. There was nothing in nature that could inform Adam of this requirement "for by his reason he could not have found out this lawe, in as much as the only commandement of God did make it necessarie, and not the necessitie thereof procure it to be commanded, as in naturall lawes it doeth."<sup>88</sup>

Clearly, as with the other reformers Luther and Calvin, Hooker acknowledges the limitations of reason's power to decide matters that pertain to the Heavenly Kingdom. He consistently makes this point because he is always drawing the distinction between things natural and supernatural. In the *Lawes* this is also an underlying theological motif. In certain types of action, natural law and the light of reason acting "alone may discover that which is so far forth in the sight of God allowable".<sup>89</sup> As an example of this, Hooker alludes to the moral imperative that we feel to look after our own flesh and blood and to care for those over whom we have specific responsibility. In such areas we can both reason correctly and do good works, just as the publicans and sinners of Jesus' time did by doing good to those who did good unto them. But beware, cautions Hooker, "for nature is no sufficient teacher what we shoulde doe that we may

attaine unto life everlasting".<sup>90</sup> "In actions of this kinde our chiefest direction is from scripture".<sup>91</sup>

## 2.8 *Hooker, Reason and Hooker Scholarship*

As we have seen at the start of this chapter Philip Hughes argued that it was Hooker who, "in classical manner, concludes the line and confirms the position of the reformed Anglicanism of the sixteenth century".<sup>92</sup> As we pointed out such a view was largely contested, not least because of the high regard that Hooker attributes to reason. A closer look at Luther and Calvin however, revealed the fact that in many ways Hooker was following their lead and that, moreover, he was also claiming to do so. Gunnar Hillerdal and Peter Munz have investigated Hooker's analysis of the power of human reason and have concluded on the one hand that Hooker is a fideist, and on the other that he is a rationalist. Both these views need to be corrected and can only be done so on the construct provided by the reformed doctrine of the of the two differing spheres of grace and Reason.

Gunnar Hillerdal's main thesis is that Hooker's work is a "philosophical failure".<sup>93</sup> Hillerdal seems to be frustrated by the distinction constantly being made between "the way of grace" and "the way of nature"; a distinction that Hooker maintains is so essential. Hillerdal writes that for Hooker reason is supposed to clarify revelation and yet, in order to do so, it first needs God's grace to enable it to understand revelation.<sup>94</sup> What Hillerdal has failed to grasp is

"the exact distinguishing" of which Hooker speaks. Because reason is unable to teach the things we must do to attain life everlasting, man needs the grace of God to open his eyes to see the truths of revelation. This does not mean that reason is not free to operate in the other spheres in which man is "civilly" and not "spiritually associated". In this area of spiritual life man needs God's grace and revelation and so it is in this area that man's faith needs to be quickened. This is far cry from fideism, a position that insists on positive Scriptural warrant for any belief.

Peter Munz takes the opposite view, and he does so on similar grounds to Gunnar Hillerdal, namely on the failure to "exactly distinguish" between varying types of law. According to Munz, Hooker holds that reason "was really equivalent to faith in that its commands extended over the same sphere of the supernatural order and were considered equivalent with divine commands and with revelation."<sup>95</sup> In order to support such a thesis Munz quotes from Book Seven of the *Laws*; "...of God's approbation, the evidence is sufficient if either himself have by revelation in his word warranted it, or we by some discourse of reason, find it good of it self."<sup>96</sup> Munz continues "Hooker has thus at last established the complete autonomy of human reason over the whole of life."<sup>97</sup>

But is this really the case? Immediately following the quotation advanced by Munz and cited above, Hooker goes on to say that we may accept the dictates of reason as being good provided that they are "unrepugnant unto any of his revealed laws and ordinances."<sup>98</sup> Once again reason is subjected to

scriptural authority. Hooker continues in a decisive manner: "we offer contumely, even unto him, when we scornfully reject what we list without any subjection than this, the brain of man hath devised it."<sup>99</sup> Clearly it cannot be maintained, even from the passage that Munz calls forth as evidence, that reason is equivalent to faith even in the sphere of supernatural order.

As with Luther and Calvin, Hooker's anthropology is based squarely on the doctrine of the two realms. In holding this in common with the Continental and English reformers Hooker sought to do justice to man's need of grace whilst at the same time acknowledging the truth, that made in the image of God, mans reason has great scope and ability. In doing so Hooker was thus able to steer a middle course between two extremes; that of allowing reason scope to control revelation on the one hand whilst on the other allowing revelation to control all of reason's activity even in those areas that apply to man "civilly associated".

## Chapter Three

### Richard Hooker and the Authority of Tradition

#### 3.1 *Introduction*

When we examined Hooker's use of Reason we saw how it could be argued that his employment of Reason was a component of his theological methodology that served to distance him from the theological first principles of the Reformation and which, in due time, came to be seen as a characteristic ingredient of Anglican theological methodology. A second characteristic theological ingredient that has been noted in Hooker and that is perceived to act as a brake to the Church's full commitment to Reformed orthodoxy is the repeated claim that what is unique about Hooker and the Church of England is that they are both "historic and reformed" or, to put it another way, that they are both "Catholic and Reformed".<sup>1</sup> To be sure, this can be seen as a further development of the argument that as a Church of the *via media* the Church of England and her most representative theologian are either not fully "reformed" because they are "catholic" or that they are not fully "catholic" because they are "reformed". On this basis has arisen not only a *via media* school of both Anglicanism and Hooker interpretation but also a confused state of affairs for, in effect, it has provided generations of Anglican thinkers with the ability to repudiate either the Church's Catholic heritage (because she is Reformed) or her Reformed heritage (because she is Catholic).<sup>2</sup> It has also at the same time permitted other Anglican thinkers to remain at one remove from either the

Church's Catholic or Reformed heritage and, if not to play one off against the other, nevertheless allowing them the freedom to develop new theologies that are not recognisable as consonant with either traditional Reformed or Catholic doctrinal commitments.<sup>3</sup>

It was imperative for Hooker, however, to demonstrate his compatibility with Reformed doctrinal orthodoxy. Hooker was hoping to "resolve the conscience" of his Puritan opponents and he realised that the only way that he could do so was to reveal, not only his personal commitment to the broad principles of a Reformed orthodoxy, but also that the Church of England was likewise committed. In taking up the defence of the Church of England against her Puritan detractors therefore Hooker was, at least by implication, asserting that he was the one who was defending the Church's Reformed heritage against those who, by a "misconceit", were less than fully paid up members of the Reformed tradition.<sup>4</sup>

If it is correct that Hooker was seeking to defend the Church, whom exactly was he seeking to defend her from? From the Disciplinarians is the obvious answer, from those "that seeke (as they terme it) the reformation of Lawes, and orders Ecclesiasticall in the Church of England". These Disciplinarians were avowed and professed followers of Calvin, men who had fled to Geneva under Mary and who had returned to England under Elizabeth seeking to reform the Church along Genevan lines. Hence it has been assumed that in attacking these Puritans Hooker was concentrating his guns on the



"heresy of Calvin", for it was on Calvin's theological platform that these followers of Calvin were purporting to stand and, clearly, if he could demolish this theological edifice the puritans would have to concede defeat. But, once again, it is unclear, firstly, that Puritanism and Calvinism are synonymous, and secondly that these Puritans were as ardent disciples of Calvin as they would like to have supposed.<sup>5</sup> In many places and in keeping with his stated purpose of having "alreadie embraced" reformed orthodoxy, Hooker is able to strengthen his case by citing Calvin's support, thereby indirectly claiming to be the true inheritor of reformed doctrine. For example, in contrast to an extreme biblicism Hooker appeals to Calvin's teaching on the power of the Church to make laws to regulate her life. She does not need Scriptural authority for every action she takes. Furthermore, he also appeals to Calvin in stressing variation in outward ceremonies. In his debate with the puritan Walter Travers, when Hooker was accused of making fine scholastic distinctions, Hooker once more finds an ally who used the same techniques. Moreover, confronted with the demand that the Church of England should abandon anything that smacked of Catholicism on the basis that the Church of Rome was not a Church at all, Hooker is able to quote Calvin who taught that Rome, although a corrupt Church, "broken quite in pieces, forlorn, misshapen" was "yet a Church". Most significantly Hooker is able to show that he is better acquainted with Calvin's doctrine than his supposed followers. In resisting the high claims being made for Presbyterian government Hooker argues that such exalted claims did not originate with Calvin at all but with his successor Theodore Beza.<sup>6</sup> Calvin himself had quite open views on the

value of Episcopacy, never criticising the Reformed churches which retained bishops.

If this proves that Hooker was closer to the doctrinal principles of the Reformation than has previously been admitted or recognised, there is still a further problem that needs to be addressed. As has been argued above, the *via media* concept is based on the assumption that what is unique about Hooker in particular and Anglicanism in general is that they are both "historic and reformed". This implies two things. It implies that the Church of England is "historic" in a sense that the Reformed churches are not and it also implies that the Reformation was concerned with novelty and newness. But a cursory reading of Reformation theology reveals a great preoccupation with historic roots and with tradition. Luther felt deeply the charge that he was breaking with the historic, primitive Church of antiquity; that specific accusation, he said, was a blow that "really strikes home".<sup>7</sup> The Roman Church claimed to be the true Church and Luther could not deny that the Reformers had received from them "God's word and the office of the Apostles,...Holy Scripture, baptism, the sacraments, and the office of preaching".<sup>8</sup> This is what Rome constantly emphasised and Luther found it very difficult to deny their claims. He was tormented by the thought that he was in error and that he was opposing the Holy Catholic Church. On what basis then did the Reformation proceed? Essentially it proceeded on two fronts. It appealed to the Scriptures and, most importantly for our purposes, it also appealed to Tradition and the practice of the primitive Church. Thus it was the Reformers who laid claim to a real catholicity as they

believed that they were teaching that which the Church had always taught, believed and done. As Calvin was to write, "we teach not an iota that we have not learned from the divine Oracles; and we assert nothing for which we cannot cite as guarantors the first teachers of the Church, prophets, apostles, bishops, evangelists, Bible expositors".<sup>9</sup>

If this is true, in what sense can it be said that the Church of England is "historic" when compared with other reformed churches? Surely they would also see themselves as "historic"? Could it not be argued that the Reformers both in England and on the Continent had as deep an appreciation of tradition as Hooker? This has often been denied in the past and Hooker's "historic sense" has been pointed to as another distinguishing mark of his theology.<sup>10</sup> It is true that Hooker's historic sense is a prominent feature of the *Laws* but he was writing against those whose historic judgement was deeply flawed. But one must not let the fact that Hooker was writing against those who had supposedly drunk deeply at the well of Calvin to drive one to argue that Calvin and the Reformation as a whole was characterised by an unhistorical approach and that what is a characteristic feature of Hooker is attenuated and weak in other Reformers. In order to proceed therefore we shall need to examine the attitude to tradition of Hooker's theological opponents and this will be achieved by examining the approach to Tradition taken by Thomas Cartwright. We shall then examine Hooker's position, before glancing at the approach to Tradition taken by the Reformation in general, and end by looking at the approach adopted by the magisterial reformers. In conclusion we shall then be able to see where Hooker

fits into the general pattern. It might also help us to form a judgement as to whether Hooker scholarship as a whole has been led into asserting that what was a particular feature of disciplinarian theology was also a general feature of Reformed theology.

### 3.2 *The Puritans and Tradition*

The Puritans' attitude to tradition was brought into sharp and clear focus in the theological clash that took place between Walter Travers and Richard Hooker. As is well known and documented Richard Hooker was appointed the Master of the Temple Church in 1585. He was, in fact, a compromise candidate. Archbishop Whitgift would have preferred Dr Nicholas Bond but the negotiations for the Mastership had become a trial of strength with Lord Burghley who supported the Presbyterian Walter Travers. In the event both sides had to compromise and Richard Hooker became Master and Walter Travers Reader. In the March of the following year a storm of controversy broke and at the heart of the controversy lay a dispute over the precise and exact nature of the Church of England's relationship with the Church of Rome. In due course this crystallised into a dispute over the question of the Church of England's continuity with the historic Church of the past and it provides an important insight into the position adopted by the radical wing of the Reformation.<sup>11</sup>

The debate was triggered by one of Hooker's sermons. It concerned the nature of the church and it was seeking to refute papal apologists who were

arguing that the Church of England, in breaking from the Church of Rome, had become nothing more than a schismatic sect. As we shall see, this was a common argument used by the Catholics against the fledgling churches of the Reformation, and in attempting to answer this charge Hooker was merely employing the usual and familiar protestant arguments that the majority of his contemporaries would have shared. Accordingly Hooker portrays the Church of Rome as the Antichrist, the beast of the Apocalypse and, in a pregnant biblical phrase, asserts that it is none other than the "man of sin". The pope, Hooker claims, is a schismatic idolater "who hath made the earth so drunk that it hath reeled under us", and therefore separation from the Church of Rome should be seen as a biblical imperative to leave Babylon. Hooker is now in a position to defend the Church of England's separation from Rome, for "that which they call schism, we know to be our reasonable service unto God".<sup>12</sup> Given the corruptions of the medieval papal church, Hooker is saying, all reasonable christians are only doing their duty to God by separating themselves from her. He goes on to conclude, "The Church of Rome, being in faith so corrupted, as she is, and refusing to be reformed, as she doth, we are to sever ourselves from her".<sup>13</sup> Clearly Hooker believes that he has satisfactorily answered the charge that the Church of England is a schismatic sect. Rather, it is the Pope who is the real schismatic because of his pretentious claims of supremacy over all the churches.

In adopting this position Hooker was defending the Church of England along traditional protestant lines. No Elizabethan cleric sympathetic to the

Reformation would have found anything exceptional in Hooker's arguments. Such a position would have been taken as normative, as would his arguments that the Church of Rome undermines the doctrine of justification by faith alone. For many this lay at the heart of the antichristian nature of Popery.<sup>14</sup> Hooker also writes that "the scope of Christian doctrine is the comfort of those who are overcharged with the burden of sin".<sup>15</sup> The essence of Christianity then, is to administer the medicine which will prove a salve to those struggling under the weight of sin. But it was not clear to Hooker that the Church of Rome was able to provide this medicine. Indeed, Hooker thought that he could prove that "the doctrine professed in the Church of Rome doth bereave men of comfort, both in their lives, and at their deaths".<sup>16</sup> But if this was the case the question immediately arises as to the "example of our fathers" who remained in "communion and fellowship" with the papal church. If the doctrine of the Church of Rome is so corrupted and distorted that it is barely certain that it still retains the foundation of the faith, what of all those who died in that church? Were they saved or were they damned? Hooker is unwilling to consign the whole of the pre-Reformation church en masse to hell, so accordingly he answers that they were saved. "God I doubt not", he argues, "was mercifull to save thousands of them, though they lyved in popish superstitions".<sup>17</sup> But if salvation could still be found in the Roman church, would that not be an argument for retaining communion and fellowship, after the "example of our fathers"? Hooker does not think so "in asmuche as they sinned ignorauntly: but the truth is nowe laid open before our eyes".<sup>18</sup> In other words, Englishmen who lived and died in the centuries before the Reformation were not to be regarded "as papists" but as

"our fathers". The entire Western Church was not to be consigned to ecclesiological oblivion, for if Rome was placed beyond the pale and regarded as no Church at all there could be no salvation for those who lived and died in "communion and fellowship" with the Roman Church.

For Walter Travers Hooker's arguments seemed dangerous. Although Hooker must have been surprised at the reaction his sermons provoked, since "the greatest part" of his sermons was "against popery", Travers still regarded Hooker as tolerant of Roman errors. For Hooker the Papal Church was still a true Church. For Travers, and for many disciplinarians, it was not so obvious. They even doubted if the Church of England was a true Church, given the fact that she was reluctant to undergo further reformation along Swiss lines, so Hooker's statement that he did not doubt that "God was mercifull to save thowsands of them, though they lyved in popish superstitions" clearly implied a more indulgent attitude to the Papal Church. For Travers and for others who were seeking "further reformation" of the English Church it was imperative that they painted Rome in the blackest hues possible. In doing so they thought that they could persuade the Church of England to abandon any vestiges of popery that still remained. In this debate, as in the debate on the continent, the interpretation of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians was to prove crucial. Unlike Luther and Calvin, Travers asserted that the Galatians were excluded entirely from salvation and, in the same way, so were all those who lived and died under Popery. Consequently, the only safe way to reform the Church was to make her as unlike the Church of Rome as possible. Indeed, Thomas Cartwright was to

argue that it was safer for the Church of England to conform her ceremonies to the Muslim Turks than to the Church of Rome.

The same arguments employed by Travers were later rehearsed by the authors of *A Christian Letter*. Attempting to demonstrate Hooker's departure from the received orthodoxy, they wrote that although the "Reverend fathers" of the Church of England had taught that "without Christ the Church is no church" and that the Church of Rome is "without Christ" because, "as it is now utterlie voyd of God's word, it is as a lantern without light".<sup>19</sup> Hooker, nevertheless, seemed to be striking a different note. Notwithstanding his insistence that the Church of Rome is Babylon and the "Man of Sin", he seemed happy to affirm the papists "to be the familie of Jesus Christ" and that reformation "is not to sever ourselves from the church wee were before" because "in the church wee were, and we are so still".<sup>20</sup> To the authors of *A Christian Letter* such sentiments were unsound. Hooker seemed to them to be another "Elias, to bring again the people unto the God of their Fathers" and to cause many "to look back into Egypt" from which they had just come. The puritans confess that they are "in a streight" unless Hooker enlightens them. "For if wee beleeve you, we must think our reverend Fathers to have misledd us all this while, either of malice, or ignorance; if wee beleeve them we must think that Mai. Hoo. is verie arrogant and presumptuous to make him selfe the onlie Rabbi."<sup>21</sup>

Unfortunately Hooker has not left marginal notes in this section of the *Christian Letter* so it is difficult to know exactly how he would have answered these charges. But that he was sensitive to the fact that many were still in the



process of converting to Rome is not in doubt. But what is motivating both the Disciplinarians and Hooker at this point of difference over the fate of "our fathers", and what is causing them to divide over the continuity or discontinuity of the Church of England with the historic Church of the past, are contrasting views over the nature of historical development and church tradition.

The status of the primitive church was of intense interest in all the Reformation debates on ecclesiastical authority.<sup>22</sup> It has been said that "nothing in early Elizabethan religion was quite so sacred as the primitive church. Upon it hung the entire case of English religion against Rome" and also that "the debate between Anglican and Puritan over church polity may be viewed as an historical analysis of the normative nature of the primitive church".<sup>23</sup> For the Disciplinarians, as for all the protagonists, the cause for which they were fighting was for the restoration of the Apostolic and primitive Church. Deeply embedded at the heart of the Puritan case was a view of the Church as absolutely fallen and corrupt. Cartwright could write in his *A Reply to an Answer*, for example, "that is true whatsoever is first: that is false whatsoever is later".<sup>24</sup> To be sure, this restitutionist or restorationist impulse could characterise the magisterial Reformers as well as the Anabaptists and even Hooker. The difference was the extent to which they would allow the idea of the Church as fallen to control their thinking, not only in terms of time but also in terms of whether they regarded both doctrine and indifferent ceremonies as also fallen.

For Hooker's opponents their adherence to the concept of the Church as fallen was well nigh absolute. Calvin sought to restore the Church to its doctrinal purity, but for him that did not mean a complete return to the institutions, ceremonies and rites of the primitive Church. Doctrinal purity was his primary aim. The English disciplinarians, however, absolutised his position and extended the concept of the church's fall to cover not only doctrine but also church government. For them there was a direct corollary between "pureness of doctrine" and the "eldership severally placed" in the churches. If the apostolic pattern of Church government was allowed to decay, then also doctrine became corrupted. The two concepts could not be separated. Thus, although Cartwright and others could approve of the Reformation in so far as it had gone in England, it had not gone far enough. Thomas Cartwright was fond of comparing the state of the Church in his time to the period under Ezra and Nehemiah when the Jews were rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. By a simple process of extension the physical wall of Jerusalem became

"the spirituall wal of the Church whiche is the discipline the lorde appointed aswel for strenght of yt as for holding out of all adversarie power whether yt be corruption of doctrine or manners. The first is to be seen in the Act. of thapostles: where (after the churches gathered by preaching there was an eldership severally placed in them) to whom the execution of the church discipline doth especially appertain. The other may as easily appear to him that considereth the estate of the churche after the Apostles by monuments off those times: in which allwaies as sort of government left by them was first suffred to decaie so the purenes of doctrine decreased: until the church ytself (except for a few stones here and there scattered) was browght to heapes of dust".<sup>25</sup>

If the Disciplinarians wished to reform not only doctrine but also church government and ceremonies, they still had to answer a series of questions. They had to decide at what point the Church had been "brought to heapes off dust"

and what exactly the corruptions were that had brought the Church into this condition. Such questions however were not easy to answer. On the one hand it was admitted that the corruptions had developed over a long period, so it proved difficult to pin point a precise time when the Church "fell", and yet on the other hand it was essential for the disciplinarians to speak of a time when the Church fell because in advocating the parity of ministerial authority they also had to overcome the charge of novelty. The charge of novelty levelled against this doctrine could be overcome, they thought, by emphasising what all the Reformers emphasised, namely, that they were restoring the Church to her original purity. For Hooker's opponents the corruption of the Church was most visibly seen in the creation of Episcopal government. According to Cartwright this "wicked error" had come to be accepted in a straight denial of Christ's words in Matthew 20:25-26. There Jesus had told his disciples that they were not to be like the Gentiles whose system of government involved the exercising of authority by the great over the rest. But in Cartwright's eyes episcopal government inevitably entails the exercising of authority and dominion by the one over the many. Not only is this a contradiction of Christ's command; it has also led to the most terrible of abuses, for it created amongst the clergy a lust for power which has only served to corrupt the Ministry and the Church. For Cartwright ministerial authority and dominion can only be that which is gained through the example of a virtuous and godly life, and the only pre-eminence one minister may have over another is that of a temporary nature that circumstances may demand, for example as a moderator in a council of ministers. For those seeking the "further reformation" of the Church of England the "spiritual wall"

that still had to be established was the creation of presbyteries and, in the disciplinarians' eyes, this was "the order and preheminance the Apostles times and those that were neare them kept". Cartwright continues in his *A Replye to an Answer*,

"the nearer they came to the apostles times the nearer they kept them to thys order and the farther of they were from those times until the discovering of the sonne of perdition the further of were they from thys moderation and the nearer they came to tirannie and ambitious power which oppressed and overlayed the churche of God."<sup>26</sup>

But if the creation of Episcopacy was the "wicked error" and "tirannie" that led to the growth of hierarchical power, when did that "wicked error" emerge into the light of day? Looking back over the course of Church history Cartwright identifies several incidents between the fourth and seventh centuries that had led to the Church's fall. Firstly Emperor Galerius Maximinus, seeking to promote his own brand of superstitious religion, had chosen his highest magistrates as bishops and then handsomely endowed them. This then became the pattern that was duly followed by other emperors. Secondly, under Constantine, men were allowed to appeal to their bishops as judges rather than the secular magistrates and so the Church was given authority that properly belonged to the Prince. Thirdly it was after the Council of Nicea that bishops enlarged their rule. As the Church grew it was necessary for the bishops to create others, which they did by keeping the episcopal title for themselves and appointing subordinates. As a result new levels of hierarchy were created which proved to be "the stairs whereby the antichrist might climb up into his accursed seat". In such a way, the "Giant of Rome" grew from a child that was conceived out of a clerical lust for power wedded to imperial complicity.<sup>27</sup>

In deploying such arguments it must be remembered that Cartwright was seeking to overcome the charge of novelty that was being levelled at the attempted creation of presbyteries. In Cartwright's view the advocates of Episcopacy could only base their arguments on human tradition and political expediency. By arguing in this way Cartwright was hoping to demonstrate that the growth of Episcopacy coincided almost exactly with the Church's fall and lapse into darkness and decay. This line of argument fitted Cartwright's purposes extremely well. As Cartwright had already maintained, "the spirituall wal" of the Church was "the discipline the lorde appointed". If that discipline was ignored corruption set in, and this could be easily proved by the Church's lamentable history over the past thousand years. Conversely, if the "the spirituall wal" of "the discipline of the lorde" is restored, then "purenes of doctrine" is also more likely to increase. But although Cartwright was fond of speaking of the Church's darkness increasing over the past thousand years, he was forced at points to assert that the seeds of the Church's fall were planted almost immediately after the death of the Apostles. In dispute with Whitgift the Archbishop of Canterbury Cartwright was forced to concede that although the hierarchical titles of patriarch, archbishop and bishop were extensively used in the Church before the Antichristian rise of popery, nevertheless the roots of Antichristian practice were all in evidence years before. Cartwright maintained,

"althoughe the Loover of this antichristian building were not set up yet the foundations thereof being secretly and under the grounde laide in the apostles times you might easely knowe that in those times that you speake of the building was wonderfully advaunced and grown very high....as long as the apostles lived the churche remained a pure virgine for that if there were any that went about to corrupte the holy rule that was preached they did it in the darke and as it were digging underneath the earthe. But after

the death of the apostles and that generation was past...then the placing of wicked error began to come into the church."<sup>28</sup>

Because Whitgift was able to show that many of the practices about which Cartwright was complaining in the reformed Church of England predated the rise of popery, Cartwright was forced to take an increasingly extreme position, and it is against this that Hooker was writing. Firstly, because Cartwright was forced into admitting that the seeds of Antichristian popery were being laid even in the apostolic Church, then clearly Antichrist was active even then. If that was the case however, nothing done or practised by the apostles could be a reliable and safe guide; an absurd position, as Whitgift was quick to point out. Secondly the disciplinarian's extremism is further reflected in his absolute insistence that the church discipline and church doctrine are inextricably tied. Thus the Church has no more freedom to order its external affairs than Noah had freedom to design the ark, Moses the ark of the covenant or Solomon the temple. Thirdly, and most significantly, is the view that the Church, for most of her life up until the coming of the Reformation, was merely a "heape of dust" with the odd believer or groups of believers "here and there scattered" as stones. On the presuppositions that the Church was corrupt from the beginning, that presbyterianism was the Church's defence and wall, and that for the larger part of her history the Church was no Church at all, rested the case of those who sought to reform the Church of England along Genevan lines. Such a view was repudiated by Hooker who was able to stress not only the Church of England's continuity with the Church of Rome but also that the Church of Rome, although

a corrupt Church, was still "to be held and reputed a parte of the howse of God, a limme of the visible Church of Christ".<sup>29</sup>

### 3.3 *Richard Hooker and Tradition*

As Hooker contemplated the Puritan arguments that confronted him, he adopted an historical approach that sought to place the Church of England's settlement within the broader perspective of historical development. Hooker, unlike his Puritan opponents, saw history as a gradually unfolding continuum and not as a series of unrelated events that allowed certain periods to be exalted above others whilst at the same time permitting other ages to be dismissed and ignored. It was the radically unhistorical approach adopted by the Puritans that constrained Hooker into providing a historical perspective with which to view the present as merely a moment in historical progression.<sup>30</sup>

What prompted Hooker to take up this position was the Puritans' insistence that in calling for "the reformation of Lawes, and orders Ecclesiastical, in the Church of England" they were merely reconstituting the essence of the Apostolic Church. Hooker, of course, realised that far from rebuilding the Apostolic Church they were, in fact, engaged in building something radically new, whilst the whole time protesting that presbyteral government was truly Apostolic and ancient. The trouble was that Calvin's so-called followers had deceived themselves into thinking that the Genevan system of Church discipline was divinely revealed and was "simply propounded as out of the scriptures of

God". But Hooker was able to show that Calvin's discipline grew up in response to the historical circumstances that were then prevailing in Geneva, and once a form of government was decided on such pragmatic grounds then, and only then, was scriptural justification found for it.

Hooker's account of the events in Geneva can be found in his Preface to the *Lawes*. He begins by saying that when he first began to examine the Puritan arguments he was inclined to think "that undoubtedly such numbers of otherwise right well affected and most religiouslie enclined mindes, had some marvellous reasonable inducements which led them with so great earnestnes that way".<sup>31</sup> Upon investigation however Hooker realised that this was not the case at all. Indeed Hooker was able to show that Presbyterianism was just as much an outgrowth of political expediency and historical development as Episcopacy, except with one major difference. The Puritans refused to countenance that any such historical or political considerations had any part to play, contending rather that it was extracted purely and simply from Scripture and that it was binding upon all the godly.

Hooker's account of the political and historical situation that gave birth to Presbyterianism is described in his Preface. Calvin, having been banished from France, "fell at the length upon Geneva", a city recently abandoned by the Bishop and clergy due to the city's "suddaine attempt for abolishment of popish religion". In this political vacuum when the city had "neither King, nor Duke, nor noble man of any authoritie or power over them" but everything was decided by



officers elected every year, Calvin realised that stability had to be enforced. The same stability had also to be brought to the Church: "for spiritual government, they had no lawes at all agreed upon, but did what the Pastors of their soules by persuasion could win them unto". Calvin, now a preacher in the city and "a divinitie reader amongst them", saw that it was dangerous "that the whole estate of that Church should hang on so slender a thred, as the liking of an ignorant multitude is, if it have power to change whatsoever it selfe listeth". Accordingly Calvin and one or two other ministers persuaded the people to bind themselves by oath never to admit the Papacy into the town again and to submit themselves to the form of Church government "as those their true and faithfull Ministers of Gods word had agreeable to Scripture set downe for that ende and purpose". To this the people of Geneva consented but no sooner had they taken "the bit...into their mouthes" when they "began to repent them of that they had done". Calvin was duly banished from Geneva but once his fame spread the people wanted him back again because all the time his fame was spreading so also did Geneva's "infamy...which had so rashly and childishly ejected him". They duly invited Calvin back again but now Calvin had the whip hand. This time he saw

"how grosse a thing it were for men of his qualitie, wise and grave men, to live with such a multitude, and to be tenants at will under them, as their ministers, both himselfe and others, had bene. For the remedy of which inconvenience he gave them plainly to understand, that if he did become their teacher againe, they must be content to admit a complet forme of discipline, which both they, and also their pastors should now be solemnly sworn to observe for ever after."<sup>32</sup>

Hooker goes on further to reduce Calvin's achievement in Puritan eyes. Because the Bishop and his clergy had already departed "by moonelight" it was almost impossible for the now reformed city of Geneva to adhere to Episcopacy. Given

that particular and unique historical situation Hooker agrees that Calvin's solution was one that not even "the wisest at that time living could have bettered", provided one considers "what the present state of Geneva did then require".<sup>33</sup> In other words Hooker is refusing to concede to Calvin's Genevan discipline any more recognition than that which was demanded for it by the particular political and ecclesiastical situation which at that time prevailed. That is not to say that it was unscriptural. It is merely to say that Calvin saw what the political situation demanded, he then constructed his Church government, and then, and only then, did he seek scriptural support for it. But that is all that could be legitimately claimed. As Hooker wrote, after examining all the scriptural proof texts,

"the most which can be inferred upon such plenty divine testimonies is this, That some things which they maintain, as far as some men can probably conjecture do seem to have been out of scripture not absurdly gathered."<sup>34</sup>

If this is the case however, how was it that so many "right well affected and most religiouslie enclined minds" were led astray into thinking that Calvin's proposals for Geneva should be binding upon all the reformed churches? In an extraordinarily shrewd account of puritanism's popular appeal Hooker analyses the propaganda methods that were employed to "move the common sort". Firstly the "integritie, zeale and holines" of those advocating change was greatly enhanced by the severity and "sharpnes of reproofe" with which they criticised the structures of the Church of England. This was a masterstroke of manipulation because it led people into thinking that those who were "constant reproovers of sinne" must themselves be "singularly good" and virtuous.<sup>35</sup> Having now "gotten this much sway in the hearts of men" it was an easy step

into persuading them that the only remedy was the establishment of godly discipline; a step many were prepared to take especially since "the very notions and conceipts of mens minds" had so been fashioned "that when they read the Scripture, they may thinke that every thing soundeth the advancement of that discipline,...to the utter disgrace of the contrary".<sup>36</sup> Hooker was confronted therefore with men who had been brainwashed, reading into the Scriptures that which they had already been prepared to accept as biblical and automatically rejecting any interpretation that did not fit in to their already prepared scheme. This exegetical technique Hooker deemed to be both socially dangerous and historically naive. It was socially dangerous because when "they and their Bibles were alone together, what strange phantasticall opinion soever at any time entered into their heads, their use was to think that the Spirit taught it them."<sup>37</sup> Having set out on this path, Hooker warns, no one should be surprised if they continually discover new innovations that need to be introduced into the life of the Church and if their practices become more and more deviant. "These men", argues Hooker, "in whose mouths at first sounded nothing but only mortification of the flesh, were come at length to think they might lawfully have six or seven wives apiece".<sup>38</sup>

Hooker has now succeeded in isolating what he understands to be the theological mistake that lies at the centre of the puritan's case. It lacks consensus and is distinctly marked by what Hooker terms "singularity".<sup>39</sup> Hooker identifies an ever present danger that often afflicts theologians who become so enamoured of their opinions that they lose any sense of objectivity. Because "nature worketh

in us all a love to our own counsels" and any contradiction is often "a fan to inflame that love" so that the constant quest "to maintain that which once [they] have done, sharpeneth the wit to dispute, to argue, and by all means to reason for it".<sup>40</sup> When this occurs individual and subjective thinking has been so elevated that what is merely private opinion becomes a powerful means of coercion to subject others in the Church to the same opinion. But, Hooker maintains, those whose hearts are so possessed by unique and novel opinions ought to be extremely suspicious of their motives. Hooker argues that

"where singularity is, they whose hartes it possesseth ought to suspect it the more, in as much as if it did come from God and should for that cause prevail with others, the same God which revealeth it to them, would also give them power of confirminge it unto others, either with miraculous operation, or with strong and invincible remonstrance of sound reason, such as whereby it might appear that God would indeed have all mens judgements give place unto it."<sup>41</sup>

But Hooker is not convinced that God would have "all mens judgementes" give place to the Presbyterian form of Church government. On the one hand "the error and insufficiencie" of their arguments makes it more than likely "that God hath not moved their hartes to think such things", but there is also on the other hand a further and more powerful reason why God has probably not revealed to them such unique and novel opinions. God is a God of order and

"if against those things which have been received with greate reason, or against that which the ancient practise of the Church hath continewed time out of minde...if against all this it should be free for men to reprove, to disgrace, to reject at their owne libertie what they see done and practised accordinge to order set downe, if in so greate varietie of waies as the witt of man is easilie able to finde out towards anie purpose, and in so greate likinge as all men especiallie have unto those inventions whereby some one shall seeme to have been more enlightned from above than manie thousands, the Church did give every man license to followe what himselfe imagineth that Gods Spirit doth reveale unto him, or what he supposeth that God is likelie to have revealed to some speciall person whose virtues deserve to be highlie esteemed, what other effect could hereupon ensewe, but the utter confusion of his Church, under pretense of beinge taught, led

and guided by his spirit: the guiftes and graces whereof doe so naturallie all tende unto common peace..<sup>42</sup>

Hooker is cautious and suspicious, then, of any new and continuing revelations that supposedly come from God and which have been revealed only to a few. In Hooker's view any new revelations that have bypassed the Church for some fifteen hundred years need to be accompanied either by miracles or by such powerful demonstration of reasonable arguments that no man will be able to gainsay or repudiate the obvious truth. It is in this context that Hooker refers to the difficulties that must have faced the Apostles as they sought to alter the laws of "heathenish religion" that had been accepted throughout the whole world. In order to do so they had to demonstrate that they were "indued with ghostly wisdom from above" that gave them the authority to undertake such an enterprise. That they had such authority was confirmed, Hooker maintains, by the miracles that they performed

"to the ende it might plainly appeare that they were the Lordes Ambassadors, unto whose Sovereigne power for all flesh to stoope, for all kingdomes of the earth to yeeld themselves willingly conformable in whatsoever should be required, it was their dutie".<sup>43</sup>

The question remaining was whether those seeking the further reformation of the Church had such Apostolic authority that the reformed Church of England should make herself "willingly conformable" to the laws of other reformed churches notwithstanding that they are of the same "confession in doctrine".<sup>44</sup> Hooker did not think so. On the one hand Hooker draws a distinction between doctrine and order ("lawes touchinge matter of order are changeable, by the power of the Church; articles concerninge doctrine not so") and on the other hand there is a strong presumption running throughout his work that there is a

finality to God's self disclosure and that so-called continuing revelations of God's Spirit were to be treated with the utmost caution and discriminating judgement.<sup>45</sup> In Book One of the *Lawes* Hooker had argued that since all things necessary to salvation had been made known in the gospel God had "[surceased] to speake to the world since the publishing of the Gospell of Jesus Christ, and the deliverie of the same in writing" since now "the way of salvation" was with such sufficiency opened that "wee neede no other meanes for our full instruction".<sup>46</sup>

Hooker has now warned his readers of the dangers inherent in adopting a subjective approach in the search for truth. Individualism is to be guarded against and not encouraged, for it is in the following of individuals that has caused Luther with the Germans "and with many other Churches, Calvin to prevaile in all things".<sup>47</sup> The trouble was that it was all too easy, when reading the Scriptures in isolation or at best only in the company of like minded people, that "strange phantasticall" opinions should rapidly grow. Hooker's remedy to this is to search for a truly genuine consensus and catholicity.<sup>48</sup>

Hooker develops his thoughts on this matter at various points throughout the *Lawes*. He realises of course that in stressing the tradition of the Church he would quickly be accused of hanging his judgement "upon the Churches sleeve", and so, once again, be fulfilling the Puritan's prophecy that Hooker was searching for means to contradict all the principal points of English belief and to subject the Church once more to Roman dominion. Hooker is

therefore very careful to spell out early on in the *Lawes* that his understanding of Tradition is not the same as that currently held by the Church of Rome. He provides a direct and strong "no" in answer to the demand whether the Church of England is bound in the sight of God "to yeeld to traditions urged by the Church of Rome the same obedience and reverence as we doe his written lawe, honouring equallie and adoring both as Divine".<sup>49</sup> That Hooker holds to the supremacy of Scripture he admits to, writing, "what scripture doth plainelie deliver, to that the first place both of credit and obedience is due".<sup>50</sup> In giving Scripture the supremacy it must not be thought that Hooker allows no scope or room to be given to the power and weight of Church tradition. For Hooker it is a matter of humility. It is presumptuous to think that God would reveal unto a few what he has not revealed unto many. Over and over again Hooker writes in this vein. He insists that Christians should not

"lightlie esteeme what hath bene allowed as fitt in the judgement of antiquitie and by the longe continewed practise of the whole Church, from which unnecessarie to swarve experience hath never found safe."<sup>51</sup>

Moreover, it must also be remembered that if the Church changes "a lawe which the custome and continuall practise of many ages or years hath confirmed in the mindes of men, to alter it must needs be troublesome and scandalous".<sup>52</sup> Great damage can be done to a society that seeks to change its laws and this no more so than in matters of religion. It must be remembered that "lawes as in all other things humaine, are many times full of imperfection, and that which is supposed behooful unto men, proveth often times most pernicioius".<sup>53</sup>

In furthering his argument Hooker quotes with approval Solomon, the early Church Father Basil the Great, Rabbi Ismael and Cassianus, all of whom had respectively written that "two are better than one", "anie thinge is [not] done as it should be, if it be wrought by an agent singlinge it selfe from consorts", "take not upon thee to be a judge alone", and that "there is no place of audience left for them, by whom obedience is not yeilded to that which all have agreed upon".<sup>54</sup> Of course the Puritans could argue, and they attempted to argue, that they did indeed have the consensus for which Hooker was seeking. Did not the "best of the reformed churches" all agree with them? Had not Geneva, Scotland and the Reformed churches in France embraced Presbyterianism and should not the now Reformed Church of England also follow suit? Once more Hooker dissented and he dissented because of the particular form of consensus with which the advocates of radical change were working. For whilst they might have the majority consensus of the moment, in so far as Presbyterianism was being adopted by many of the reformed churches, they certainly lacked the consensus of the ages. For Hooker this is an extremely important point. True catholicity is recognised by the presence of a doctrine, not in any one particular age or in one particular regional or national church, but in the whole community of the Church throughout the whole of Christian history. In a very real sense this is merely an extension of his suspicion of "singularity". Hooker, as we have already seen, was deeply suspicious of singularity in individual exegesis, in groups of individuals who all think the same, and in regional and national churches, and he is suspicious because he realised that it was easy to absolutise permanently the partial and imperfect insights of any individual church or age. This is what the



puritans were seeking to do in imposing their "methinketh" into the orders of the Church of England. On the other hand in defending Episcopacy Hooker can not only call upon the witness of the whole Church universal but also claim apostolic authority. In fact, because Hooker can lay claim to the former he can also lay claim to the latter on the simple basis that if it was the practice of the whole church it must needs be Apostolic. Two quotes from Hooker to establish this point will suffice. In appealing for support from the whole Church in all ages Hooker writes,

"A thousand five hundred years and upward the Church of Christ hath now continued under the sacred regiment of Bishops. Neither for so long hath Christianity been ever planted in any kingdom throughout the world but with this kind of government alone, which to have been ordained of God, I am for mine own part even as resolutely persuaded, as that any other kind of Government in the world whatsoever is of God"<sup>55</sup>

and, in calling for Apostolic support,

"The Apostles of our Lord did according unto those directions which were given them from above, erect Churches in all Cities, as received the Word of Truth, the Gospel of God: All Churches by them erected, received from them the same Faith, the same Sacraments, the same form of publick regiment."<sup>56</sup>

In contrast with this the consistorial discipline being advanced by the Puritan party is a "strange and absurd conceit...the mother of Schism, and of confusion", nothing "but a dream newly brought forth, and seen never in the Church before".<sup>57</sup>

The corollary of Hooker's understanding of consensus and catholicity gives him a breadth of vision and theological understanding denied to both Puritans and Roman Catholics. The Puritan's promotion of Presbyterianism had the unfortunate effect of giving people to understand that truth is simply that

which men agree upon in any particular age and is consequently relative and not perpetual. Ultimately this can only have a disastrous effect. Hooker argues that long standing laws "induce men unto...willing obedience and observation" simply because they have the "waight of...many mens judgment" and "long experience".<sup>58</sup> Change such laws and the "force of those grounds, whereby all lawes are made effectual" are considerably weakened and society is rendered increasingly volatile and unstable. It can now be seen why it was so important for Hooker to emphasise the Church of England's continuity with the Church of Rome. Hooker disputes the Puritan's teaching that the Church for the past thousand years had fallen and that the Church of England should not follow her in any thing because they were neither the Church of God nor their forefathers. Rather, and in contrast, Hooker accentuates the Church's continual soundness and he has no truck with the view that the Church had utterly fallen.<sup>59</sup> It may well be surmised that Hooker had learnt from Cartwright's debate with Archbishop Whitgift where the Archbishop had been able to demonstrate that many of the things that troubled the Puritan conscience actually predated the rise of Popery. Be that as it may, Hooker never follows the Puritans or the early Reformers in limiting the testimony of the Fathers to the first five centuries. Hooker rhetorically asks his Puritan opponents that if Presbyterianism was in the "prime of the Church...how far will they have that prime to extend?" and if the Church for the past thousand years had indeed fallen, "where the later spring of this new supposed disorder" began?<sup>60</sup>

How then does Hooker view the Reformation? Without a doubt, as Hooker demonstrates in his *A Learned Discourse of Justification, Works and how the Foundation of Faith is Overthrown*, he is committed to the central and cardinal tenets of the Reformation. But he does not view the Church of England's break with Rome as a break with that which was held and believed to be true by all Christians in all ages. That would be to violate his own canons with respect to true catholicity and consensus. Hooker's view is clearly stated towards the end of Book IV. According to Hooker the Church of Rome had sought to undermine the Church of England by mischievously suggesting that her new found faith was so unstable that it was "not able to stande of itselfe unlesse it lean upon the staff of their Ceremonies".<sup>61</sup> The Puritans, wishing to undercut that accusation, urged the Church of England to abolish those ceremonies, thereby proving that the reformed churches did not need them to buttress faith. But Hooker is adamant. He argues that many seem to think

"that we have erected of late a frame of some ewe religion, the furniture whereof we should not have borrowed from our enimies, lest they relieving us might afterwards laugh and gibe at our povertie; whereas in truth the Ceremonies which we have taken from such as were before us, are not things that belong to this or to that sect, but they are the auncient rites and customes of the Church of Christ; whereof our selves being a part, we have the selfe same interest in them, which our fathers before us had, from whom the same are descended unto us."<sup>62</sup>

Hooker's position is grounded on two essential premises. Firstly, because the Church "was from the beginning is and continueth unto the end", even though "in all parts have not been alwaies equallie sincere and sound", nevertheless it is quite legitimate to retain those things that have always existed in the Church from the very beginning, since at no point in the Church's history could it be ventured that the Church had ceased to be the Church. This was a guiding

principle of the English Reformation, claims Hooker, for it proceeded on the basis that only "those things which were least needful and nueliest come should be the first that were taken away".<sup>63</sup> But once those were removed the Church of England could with integrity maintain and keep that which remained. Secondly, Hooker believed that because the Church has never actually fallen there has also existed a continual consensus of truth. That is not to say that parts of the Church had not suffered from periods of corruption and decay or that individual christians had not lapsed into heresy and error, but it is to say that notwithstanding such aberrations the Church herself still maintained and held on to the essentials of the faith.<sup>64</sup>

Hooker has now revealed what has been termed his deep "historical sense".<sup>65</sup> Because of his refusal to concede that the Church had utterly fallen and become totally corrupt Hooker is able to regard the Church's development as being directed, controlled and under the hand of God. Take, for example the development of Episcopacy. We have seen how Thomas Cartwright drew a parallel between the growth of a hierarchy and the increasing doctrinal decay and laxity. To his mind the two phenomena were interrelated and his solution was to abolish the hierarchy and so restore doctrinal purity. But Hooker's historical sense meant that he was unperturbed by Cartwright's account of the development of Episcopacy. Whilst Hooker is convinced of the Episcopate's Apostolic and Divine origin, he does not then go on to insist that since its foundation it has not altered or changed as it moved into unchartered waters or as it confronted new developments in society.<sup>66</sup> In fact Hooker is able to point to the pages of the

New Testament itself, where "there did grow in short time" men who were "inued with Episcopal Authority over the rest" in order to prevent the spread of heresy and error.<sup>67</sup> But Hooker is also willing and able to see "the special Providence of God" at work in the way the hierarchical principle grew and developed due to secular influences and circumstances. He writes that "the very state of the whole World, immediately before Christianity took place", seems to have been prepared by God, in that the political organising genius of the Romans meant that the Church was given a readily adaptable geographical framework on which to construct her own administration. This did not imply that the Church was wrong in adapting herself to changing circumstances. Because God was guiding and leading His Church, orderly change is to be expected and anticipated. But the Puritans could not see this. That is why Hooker's description of the origins of Presbyterianism in the Preface to the *Laws* must have been so infuriating, for Hooker was able to show that Calvin, as with the Episcopate in the past, was simply responding to political and historical circumstance. In this Calvin was confronting his own particular situation and doing the best he could; in Hooker's view no man living could have done better. But the point that Hooker was making was a simple one. Just because of the particular historical circumstances prevailing in Geneva one cannot argue that the Church of England needed to follow her. The situation in England is different. The bishops have not had cause to flee. The Episcopate is still intact. God leads his church in different ways depending on circumstance and the ongoing progression of history. Moreover, because the Church is rooted in history and it accordingly develops in history, continuous and gradual change is inevitable and indeed desirable. This

accounts, says Hooker, for the rich diversity in many practices that have grown up in many different churches throughout the world. Hooker likens diversity in Church practise to diversity in language. Just because speech is "necessarie amongst all men throughout the worlde", this does not "thereby import that all men must necessarily speake one kinde of language". Even so, continues Hooker, "the necessitie of politie and regiment in all Churches may be helde, without holding anie one certayne forme to be necessarie in them all".<sup>68</sup>

The case for adaptation and change has now been made and advanced by Hooker. It was, of course, imperative for him to do so, given that he was defending the Church of England which had only recently broken with the Church of Rome. So far, as we have seen, Hooker has upheld the twin ideas of consensus and catholicity, alongside a defence of adaptation and change in the light of historical circumstances. In this way Hooker is freed from a slavish imitation of the Apostolic Church, for he realised that the social and political situation in the Church of the early centuries was totally different from the social and political situation of sixteenth century England. Hooker here demonstrates remarkably modern insights and it means that his appeal to the Primitive Church is not of an archaeologising nature. In other words, Hooker does not appeal to antiquity for the sake of appealing to antiquity. Although he can write "the auncienter, the better ceremonies of religion are", he can also say, "howbeit, not absolutely true and without exception, but true only so farre forth as those different ages do agree in the state of those things for which at first those rites, orders, and ceremonies were instituted".<sup>69</sup> A final question then remains: how

does Hooker distinguish between what is adaptable and what is perpetual in the Christian religion?

If Hooker is correct in his assumption that it was due to "the want of an exact distinguishing" between "the way of grace" and "the way of nature" that the Puritan's views on Reason were so distorted, then it should come as no surprise that he also detected a "misdistinguishing" between "matters of discipline and Church-government" and "matters necessarie to salvation" that so skewed the Puritan's views on Tradition.<sup>70</sup> Hooker had inherited from Jewel and Whitgift the distinction between things necessary to salvation and matters indifferent, and he must also have been aware that the Lutherans were also familiar with such distinctions especially where they argued that rites and ceremonies belonged to the *adiaphora*. In Hooker's view the great danger of the Disciplinarian's position was that it attempted to make a practice in and of itself indifferent binding on the Christian conscience, thereby elevating it into a first order principle and enshrining it in "the very essence of Christianitie" and thus "necessarily required in every particular christian man".<sup>71</sup> In a significant passage Hooker defines ceremonies

"as marrying with a ring, crossing in one the one Sacrament, kneeling at the other, observing of festivall dayes moe than onely that which is called the Lordes day, injoyning abstinence at certaine times from some kindes of meate, churching of women after child-birth, degrees taken by divines in Universities, sundrie Church-offices, dignities, and callings."<sup>72</sup>

All these things, says Hooker, "have no commaundement in holy scripture" either positively or negatively and thus fall under the realm of what individual churches may legitimately accept or reject depending on their particular proclivities and

inclinations. In other words it falls within the province of human reason, with the Church effecting changes as befits her status as a political society similar to other human agencies. But what is binding for Hooker, and that which makes a matter necessary to salvation as distinct from a matter of ceremony, order and church government, is the role that Scripture begins to play. Scripture has as its end the deliverance of "duties supernaturall" and this pertains to the Church conceived as a "societie supernaturall". It follows, then, that for a matter to be necessary to salvation it must "bee expresslie conteyned in the worde of God, or else manifestly collected out of the same".<sup>73</sup> For a matter of ceremony, order and church government it is "not so" unless from the Scriptures it can be shown to be commanded or forbidden. This is a crucial point for Hooker. As we shall see, it was Hooker's concern that Scriptural authority should not be undermined, and this could only be the case if the Scriptures are used to support positions the weight of which they cannot legitimately bear. But because Hooker allows freedom where Scripture is silent and he does not demand positive commandment for things indifferent, he can rejoice in the Church's diversity so long as they held on to "one Lorde.. one faith...one baptisme".<sup>74</sup> In this way Hooker establishes the freedom of each individual and national Church to develop her own life and to accommodate the progress of history in a way that she regarded as most fit.



### 3.4 *The Reformation and Tradition*

In Part 1 to *An Apology or Answer in Defence of the Church of England* John Jewel rehearses the Roman charges levelled against the Church of England. He writes:

"They cry out upon us at this present everywhere that we are all heretics and have with new persuasions and wicked learning utterly dissolved the concord of the church; that we renew and, as it were, fetch again from hell the old many-a-day condemned heresies; that we sow abroad new sects and such broils as never erst were heard of...that we esteem neither right, nor order, nor equity, nor justice; that we give bridle to all naughtiness and provoke the people to all licentiousness and lust...that we have seditiously fallen from the catholic church and by a wicked schism and division have shaken the whole world and troubled the common peace and universal quiet of the church...that we set at nought by the authority of the ancient fathers and councils of old time; that we have rashly and presumptuously disannulled the old ceremonies, which have been well allowed by our fathers and forefathers many hundreds years past, both by good customs and also in ages of more purity; that we have by our own private head, without the authority of any sacred and general council, brought new traditions into the church; and have done all these things not for religion's sake but only upon a desire of contention and strife: but that they for their part have held and kept still such a number of years to this very day all things that were delivered from the apostles and well approved by the most ancient fathers."<sup>75</sup>

What is most striking in this section of his *Apology* is the way in which Jewel constantly returns to the criticism that the Reformers were innovators and in love with novelty. This stung not only the English but also the Continental Reformers. As Jewel writes, they were accused of inventing "new persuasions", of sowing abroad "new sects and such broils as never erst were heard of", of "falling from the catholic church", of troubling "the common peace and universal quiet of the church" and, even worse, when there was a return on the part of the Reformers to ancient times this was a return, not to primitive and Apostolic

purity, but to "fetch again from hell the old many-a-day condemned heresies". It was a common taunt of the Papists to demand where the reformed Church "did lurk, in what cave of the earth it slept, for so many hundreds of years together before the birth of Martin Luther".<sup>76</sup>

Naturally Jewel, Hooker, Calvin, Luther and indeed all the mainstream Reformers did not see themselves as inventing or creating a new church. They believed that they were reforming the old church and that, as a consequent, they stood in continuity and in direct contact with the Church of the early fathers. Novelty and innovation were furthest from their minds, for they in turn felt confident enough to level the same charge against the Church of Rome. On the contrary, they perceived their task as restoring and renewing the one Church of Christ that had become overlain and encrusted with superstition and idolatry. As this was how the Reformers perceived their task it was inevitable that in accord with the humanist principle of *ad fontes*, and in order to rid the Church of the accretions with which she had become encumbered, that there should be a strong appeal to antiquity and to the Church that lay beyond recent corruptions. The Reformers indignantly and vigorously denied the censure that they were guilty of "condemning and wholly rejecting" the fathers because they knew them to be inimical to their cause. Calvin on the continent, like Jewel in England, complained that evangelical theology was being charged with being "new" and "of recent birth". He met these allegations head on in his Prefatory Address to King Francis at the beginning of the 1536 edition of the *Institutio*. He argues that

the theology of the Reformation cannot possibly be new because it is biblical and that, for those who care to look, they "will find nothing new among us".<sup>77</sup>

It was important for the Reformers to answer this charge of novelty. Obviously a theology contrary to the unanimous interpretation of the Church since Apostolic times would lack credibility. Many of the Reformers realised this and they immersed themselves in the study of ancient and patristic texts, with Jewel and Calvin, for example, arguably becoming the greatest patristic scholars of the sixteenth century. It is one of those half truths that has done much damage that sees the Reformers as constantly quoting Scripture and the Catholics as always appealing to Tradition, for Rome could cite Scripture as much as the Reformers, and the Reformers could quote the Fathers as much as the Catholics. The martyred protestant Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, was fond of asking the Catholic Gardiner "to show any one authority for them, either of Scripture or ancient author, either Greek or Latin" and he will switch over to their side. What is impressive about Cranmer's request is the theological weight he is prepared to give to antiquity; he asks for evidence from "either scripture or ancient author".<sup>78</sup> The prerogative of Scripture or Tradition, then, was not a prerogative that belonged exclusively to either side. What was unique was the way in which scripture or tradition was used and the way in which, as a general theological method, the Reformers and the Catholics approached the question of the respective authority to be ceded to either Scripture or Tradition.

### 3.5 *Martin Luther and Tradition*

In turning to Luther as one of the magisterial Reformers it might at first appear that Luther's concept of Tradition is closer to that of Hooker's opponents than to Hooker himself. Luther held that the Church could err, and as such her authority, represented in any of her fathers or popes seen either collectively or as individuals, or in her traditions, or in official organs, is never regarded by Luther as an unconditional authority. In his interviews with Cardinal Cajetan in October of 1518 Luther was confronted by his denial of the Church's treasury of merit enunciated in the bull *Unigenitus* of Pope Clement VI in 1343. In his decisive way Luther retorted "I am not so audacious that for the sake of a single obscure and ambiguous decretal of a human pope I would recede from so many and such clear testimonies of divine scripture, for", Luther went on, "in a matter of faith not only is a council above a pope but any one of the faithful, if armed with better authority. His Holiness abuses Scripture. I deny that he is above Scripture".<sup>79</sup> In Luther's view there was no unconditional authority in the Church that existed either parallel to or apart from God's word in Scripture. Because the Church could err it was necessary for the Christian to cling to Scripture. Jesus himself had warned in Matthew 24:24 that false Christs and false prophets would appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive the elect. Looking at the Church in the Old Testament, Luther noted that the incident of David and the prophet Nathan was but an example of the erring Church. Even the New Testament provided Luther with examples of how even the Apostles erred, sinned and failed; Peter's refusal to eat with the Gentiles was a demonstration of

that fact. In its life on earth the Church struggles against the world, the flesh and the devil and it is to be expected that, although Christ is with the Church, he is with her but poured out as water, with his bones out of joint, his heart melted and with the tongue of the gospel cleaving to the roof of his mouth. Thus Luther writes we cannot trust the Church or the fathers or Tradition. "We can neither rely nor build very much on the life and the works of the fathers but build only on God's word".<sup>80</sup> Scripture reigns supreme and Tradition is not an unconditional authority.

If Tradition is not an unconditional authority, that is not to say that it has no authority at all for, as with Hooker, Luther does not hold to a view of the complete and utter fall of the Church.<sup>81</sup> It is interesting to note, in his *Lectures on Genesis*, how Luther employs the idea of the fall. He uses it in such a unique way that it bears little resemblance to the Puritan or sectarian view of the fall that spoke of a complete and relatively sudden break at a particular time in history. In lecturing on Genesis 6 and the flood Luther wrote,

"The flood came, not because the Cainite race had become corrupt, but because the race of the righteous who had believed God, obeyed His Word and observed true worship had fallen into idolatry, disobedience of parents, sensual pleasures, and the practice of oppression. Similarly, the coming of the Last Day will be hastened, not because the heathen, the Turks, and the Jews are ungodly, but because through the pope and the fanatics the church itself has become filled with error and because even those who occupy the leading positions in the church are licentious, lustful and tyrannical.

This is intended to produce dread in all of us, because even those who were born of the most excellent patriarchs began to be conceited and depart from the Word. They gloried in their wisdom and righteousness, just as the Jews did in their circumcision and in their father Abraham. Similarly, after the Popes had abandoned the knowledge of God, His Word, and His worship, they proceeded to turn their ecclesiastical distinction into carnal

luxury. Once the Roman Church was truly holy and adorned with most outstanding martyrs, but today we see to what depths it has fallen".<sup>82</sup>

The basic fact to note about Luther's treatment of the idea of the Church's fall in this passage is that he does not regard it as a once for all event from which there can be no recovery. Indeed, in this passage alone Luther perceives at least three "falls". There is the fall of the originally righteous, there is the fall of the Roman Church and there is also the fall of the Church yet to come. In other words there is a continual rising and falling in the Church's life as this constitutes the very heart of the Church's struggle in history. But, in Luther's view, there never has been one fall that extinguished the Church's life and constituted the Church as no Church at all.<sup>83</sup>

Understood in this light it is possible for Luther to maintain the continual existence of the true, hidden and sound Church. This true Church which has always existed is ruled by the Holy Spirit and it cannot err, even in the smallest article of faith, for Christ has promised to remain with her until the end of the age. To be sure Christ's promise is not automatically to be applied to the official, external reality of the Church seen in an external order of Episcopal succession. Luther does not make one of the *notae ecclesiae* an external form of Church government as Cartwright had done, and he therefore avoids confusing central issues with peripheral ones. Thus, although Luther admits that the Church can sink into apostasy, and indeed he almost recognises continual apostasy as part of the Church's nature in the world, nevertheless he felt free to assert the continual existence of the Church militant from the beginning of the world. He

compared the Church to the moon which, although it undergoes twelve or thirteen changes in a year, waxing and waning all the time, is the same moon, just as Christ, as the sun which rises and sets, is still the same.

"[The moon] is said to be formed more than the sun is through the vicissitudes of time. Thus the militant Church is one from the beginning of the world; one generation passes, another comes, one after the other the Church succeeds in the same Church. And Christ, the sun, while remaining always the same, has nevertheless died - not indeed another Christ followed by another succession - just as the same sun sets and rises always with its first light".<sup>84</sup>

Luther's ecclesiology, especially as it is reflected in his *Lectures on Genesis*, presents us with an essential view of the church that possesses the marks of unity and continuity.<sup>85</sup> Accordingly Luther is loath to depart from the norms of ecclesiastical tradition especially when Scripture is silent. Like Hooker, Luther was suspicious of those who followed their own private "special illuminations". Because Luther believed that the Holy Spirit had led the Apostles, and that he had led the entire Church since the time of the Apostles, he was more than willing to accommodate the universal practice of the Church even when he admitted that no express warrant of holy Scripture existed in support of a particular practice. A classic case in point is Luther's defence of infant baptism. Here Luther admitted that in his judgement infant baptism is not expressly commanded in Scripture, but nevertheless Luther believed that the consensus of the entire Church is binding on all the faithful provided that the practice itself is not contrary to Scripture. Similarly, and on the same grounds, Luther rejected the Zwinglian spiritualistic interpretation of the Lord's Supper. Here Luther maintained that it was dangerous and terrible to believe anything that was

contrary to the common witness, faith, and doctrine which the entire holy Church had held from the beginning until the present.

### 3.6 *John Calvin and Tradition*

Calvin's doctrine of the Church can be seen as an attempt to rationalise and give structure to Luther's thought.<sup>86</sup> As a second generation Reformer with a systematic mind Calvin began to add more formal and external elements into his ecclesiology that the later English Puritans found relatively easy to exploit. Due to this Calvin can legitimately be seen as standing closer to the theology of the Puritans than Luther, but nevertheless at certain crucial points he stands closer to the mainstream of Reformed thinking than his later followers who sought to extend his theology.

An essential point to make, as with all the Reformers, is that Calvin revered antiquity and the Primitive Church. As has already been mentioned, Calvin stoutly defended the Reformation against the charge of novelty. His answer to that charge was that evangelical doctrine was ancient on the simple basis that it was scriptural. Although, as has been pointed out elsewhere, this is essentially an appeal from Tradition to Scripture, Calvin does not hesitate to assert that, even if Scripture is abandoned and the whole case is made to rest simply on Patristic evidence, even then "the tide of victory would be on our side" and "that the greater part of what we are saying today meets their approval".<sup>87</sup> Calvin was convinced, not only that the teaching of the Fathers supported his





own position, but that it was also inimical to the heresies of Rome. Thus Calvin quoted the fathers and appealed to the tradition of the Church over and against the Catholics whenever opportunity arose. He likened the Catholics to the Anabaptists, as neither could lay claim to the consistent witness of the early Church but both followed deluding spirits that were individual and particular, spawning new doctrines and beliefs. In the *Reply by John Calvin to a Letter by Cardinal Sadolet to the Senate and People of Geneva* this comes over with some force. Speaking of auricular confession Calvin admits that the Reformers disapprove of Pope Innocent's law that "enjoins every man once a year to pass all his sins in review before his priest", but they do so simply because it was "neither commanded by Christ, nor practised by the ancient Church".<sup>88</sup> In other words it is new, it is singular and it cannot be made binding on individual Christians. All the efforts of the Reformers are directed at restoring the native purity of the Church from which it had degenerated. To a large extent Calvin felt that they had been successful, writing

"our agreement with antiquity is far closer than yours, but that all we have attempted has been to renew that ancient form of the Church, which, at first sullied and distorted by illiterate men of indifferent character, was afterwards flagitiously mangled and almost destroyed by the Roman Pontiff and his faction".<sup>89</sup>

Calvin's appeal to the Church of antiquity is necessitated not only by the polemical thrust of debate with the Church of Rome; it was also given a spur by his view of history. Unlike Luther and Hooker, Calvin spoke freely of the Church's fall, and this concept, as we have seen, was later taken up by the English Puritans.<sup>90</sup> Calvin's view of history was decidedly pessimistic but it was an idea that was firmly grounded in Scripture. From the Golden age in the

Garden of Eden man fell into the darkness and the abyss, and history can be seen as an abundant confirmation of that fact. Calvin believed that in the early stages of human development all worshipped one God but in the course of time men began to fabricate and invent a multitude of gods and idols. He wrote in his *Commentary on Daniel* that "the world always deteriorates and becomes gradually more vicious and corrupt; the world grows worse as it become older".<sup>91</sup>

This view of secular history was also applied to the history of the Church. The Golden age for Calvin, when the Church was primitive and pure, existed for about five hundred years, when "religion was in a more prosperous condition and a purer doctrine flourished".<sup>92</sup> As a result there is a decided emphasis in Calvin's citations from the Fathers to restrict them to about the middle of the fifth century. Although there is no one date when the Church fell, there is from the fifth century onwards a growing laxity in morals and doctrine. Belief in Christ's carnal presence in the Eucharist had prevailed for some six hundred years. Compulsory confession was less than three hundred years old. Papal power reached its zenith only four hundred years previously, and in all these manifestations of novelty and innovation Calvin saw the continual and inexorable decline and fall of the Church.<sup>93</sup>

Calvin's apocalyptic view of the Church's fall, then, is closely tied with later Puritan thought. Closer parallels however can also be found in that, like Cartwright after him, Calvin also linked the decline of the Church to the rise of

the papacy. Writing in his *Institutio* Calvin asserted that the medieval councils which supported the papacy met "after the light of sound doctrine was extinguished, and discipline had decayed, and when the merest dolts were present".<sup>94</sup> We already noted this doctrine in Thomas Cartwright and it is not unreasonable to suppose that he had borrowed it wholesale from Calvin. But although there are surface similarities between the Puritans and Calvin at this point, there yet remain fundamental theological differences that keep them separated.

Firstly, although Calvin held tenaciously to the idea of the Church's fall, his remedy was to restore the doctrine of the early Church and to leave the discipline of the primitive Church as a matter of indifference. Calvin was well aware that his ecclesiastical discipline was "not such as the ancient Church professed". In his *Reply to Cardinal Sadolet* Calvin freely admits this and in admitting it he shows not the slightest anxiety. For, he goes on, although their discipline is not congruent with the ancient Church, when it comes to a matter of doctrine "we hesitate not to appeal to the early Church."<sup>95</sup> This distinction between doctrine and discipline is a fundamental one and Calvin does not make the mistake of the later Puritans who in Hooker's view "misdistinguished" between them. Unlike the Puritans on this matter Calvin could be flexible, accommodating, politic, aware of local circumstances and needs as well local history and development.<sup>96</sup> At all times Calvin was striving for unity and peace and considered it his duty to reduce controversy and division in the Church. Like Hooker, Calvin felt it only legitimate to disturb the Church's peace over "the very

essence of Christianitie", and he consequently judiciously discriminated even between doctrinal articles, holding some to be less important than others. We need to quote at length in order to establish this point.

"For all the heads of true doctrine are not in the same position. Some are so necessary to be known, that all must hold them to be fixed and undoubted as the proper essentials of true religion: for instance that God is one, that Christ is God, and the Son of God, that our salvation depends on the mercy of God, and the like. Others, again, which are the subject of controversy among the churches, do not destroy the unity of the faith; for why should it be regarded as a ground of dissension between churches, if one, without any spirit of contention or perverseness in dogmatising, hold that the soul on quitting the body flies to heaven, and another, without venturing to speak positively as to the abode, holds it for certain that it lives with the Lord? The words of the Apostle are, "let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded, God shall reveal even this unto you" (Phil.iii.15). Does he not sufficiently intimate that a difference of opinion as to these matters which are not absolutely necessary, ought not to be a ground of dissension among Christians? The best thing, indeed, is to be perfectly agreed, but seeing that there is no man who is not involved in some mist of ignorance, we must either have no Church at all, or pardon delusion in those things of which one may be ignorant, without violating the substance of religion and forfeiting salvation. Here, however, I have no wish to patronise even the minutest errors, as if I thought it right to foster them by flattery or connivance; what I say is, that we are not on account of every minute difference to abandon a church, provided it retain sound and unimpaired that doctrine in which the safety of piety consists, and keep the sacraments instituted by the Lord. Meanwhile, if we strive to reform what is offensive, we act in the discharge of duty. To this effect are the words of Paul, "if anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace" (1 Cor.xiv.30). From this it is evident that to each member of the Church, according to the measure of grace, the study of public edification has been assigned, provided it be done decently and in order. In other words, we must neither renounce the communion of the Church, nor, continuing in it, disturb peace and discipline when duly arranged."<sup>97</sup>

An outcome of Calvin's ability to differentiate between discipline and doctrine leads to a second consequent that places him at some distance from Hooker's theological adversaries. Calvin was concerned that nothing should bind the consciences of Christians that could not be specified by Scripture. Because Calvin adopted this position, like Hooker, he was led, *ipso facto*, to allow

considerable spiritual latitude in the existing visible differences between the Reformed churches. Because of this Calvin could even accept Episcopacy as a mode of Church life and this despite the fact that he saw the growth of hierarchy as one of the marks of the Church's fall. He argued in the *Institutio* that bishops had emerged in the Church's life and that the rise of bishops was "introduced by human arrangement, according to the exigency of the times".<sup>98</sup> This, again, provided Calvin with no anxiety. He was not in the least concerned that there was no express literal warrant for such a development. Quoting Jerome favourably, Calvin shows no irritation at Jerome's reminder that bishops should "know that they are greater than presbyters more by custom than in consequence of our Lord's appointment, and ought to rule the Church for the common good".<sup>99</sup> Commenting on I Corinthians 11:2 Calvin wrote that "each church is free to establish whatever form of organisation is suitable and useful for itself, for God has prescribed nothing specific about this".<sup>100</sup> Calvin therefore displayed great flexibility in these matters. He was especially concerned lest the "consensus of the faithful" seen in their local manifestations should "be torn over external observances and the bond of charity be broken".<sup>101</sup> Like Hooker Calvin wrote, "as the circumstances of the times demand we are at liberty to change what men have invented".<sup>102</sup>

### 3.7 *Conclusion*

We are now in a position to reflect on the broad Reformed consensus on the authority that the Reformers were willing to extend to the concept of

Tradition. From our brief survey it can safely be maintained that all the Reformers exhibit an abiding interest with the whole question, deeply concerned to demonstrate their links with the primitive Church. They were convinced that in all essential doctrinal points their theology coincided with that of antiquity and that where they felt that they had to depart from the Fathers this was not done lightly but only on the grounds of a higher authority than that which was provided by the Tradition; namely Scripture itself.

In the matter of the continuity with the Church of the past we noted differences between Calvin and Luther, and that Hooker's stance was closer to that of Luther than that of Calvin. But even here, where Calvin differed from Luther and Hooker, there was greater level of agreement between Hooker and Calvin than there existed between Calvin and the later Puritans who were attempting to build on Scripture conclusions that could not legitimately be drawn and then to make these conclusions binding on the Church. In the mind of the earlier Reformers this would have been an abuse of Scripture. It would have been seen to cause unnecessary strife and division over what Hooker, Calvin and Luther would have agreed were not essential matters. This brings us to the question of Hooker scholarship and how it has chosen to see how Hooker employed the concept of Tradition.

### 3.8 *Hooker, Hooker Scholarship and Tradition*

Much discussion of Tradition and its authority focuses around questions of ministerial order. A large proportion of the debate between Hooker and the Puritans was taken up by this precise issue. Arguing that Presbyterianism was "simply propounded as out of the scriptures of God" the Disciplinarians were hoping to show that the Church of England was a scripturally disobedient church. It fell to Hooker to demonstrate the case firstly, that there was a distinction to be held between doctrine and order and secondly that it was injurious to Christian conscience to demand uniformity in matters that should not be held as "the verie essence of Christianitie". In this Hooker took his theological cue from the magisterial Reformers who, to a large extent, took the same position. Hooker clearly expresses this view when he writes,

"matters of fayth, and in generall matters necessarie unto salvation are of a different nature from Ceremonies, order and the kinde of Church-government; that the one are necessarie to bee expresselie conteyned in the worde of God, or else manifestly collected out of the same, the other not so.." <sup>103</sup>

Although Hooker took this line in Book III of the *Lawes*, arguing that there was no unalterable form of Church government yet he is also able to argue, in Book VII, the "Book of Bishops", that bishops were Apostolically and consequently Divinely ordained. This has inevitably led to a problem of reconciliation between a view of episcopacy on the one hand as a thing indifferent and on the other hand as something that comes perilously close to seeing episcopacy as *iure divino* and therefore permanently binding. Numerous solutions to this conundrum have been offered. <sup>104</sup> We have seen however, that

Hooker was able to defend episcopacy and the ancient three-fold ministerial order as being of Apostolic and Divine appointment and yet adaptable in the light of historic conditions; in short as being *iure divino* and yet, at the same time, as adaptable. M.R. Somerville also contends that this Hookerian position "stands at the centre of an Elizabethan episcopalian consensus" and that it is based on a "subtle distinction between scriptural recommendation of a form of church government and its immutable prescription".<sup>105</sup>

Not all Hooker scholarship, however, has chosen to regard Hooker's doctrine of the ministry in this way. A view of the ministry that is able to regard the traditional three-fold order as of Apostolic and of Divine origin and yet be accommodating of new Reformed practices provided that it is not insisted that they are to be binding on all Churches is to align Hooker with a Reformed understanding of the ministry. And yet it has been argued that Hooker's view of the ministry is not only akin to a Catholic sacramental ministry but also similar in its conception of episcopacy as of absolute necessity. In other words that the work of the Anglican clergy is essentially a sacramental ministry. J.S. Marshall asserts over and over again that, in Hooker's view, vocation is "sacramental", preaching is "secondary" and that the main responsibility of the clergy is to "celebrate the Holy Eucharist, which is so central to the sacramental system of Catholic Christianity".<sup>106</sup> In this, Marshall claims, it again reveals that Hooker is in the "Thomistic tradition" from which he also borrows his high view of ordination.<sup>107</sup>



A number of points need to be made at this juncture. Firstly, Marshall is attempting to demonstrate Hooker's continuity with the Rome; something, as we have seen, that Hooker needed to do in order to offset the Puritans radical departure from any sense of Tradition. And yet in making his point Marshall is in danger of so reading Hooker's understanding of the ministry in terms of traditional Catholicism that he is in danger of obscuring Hooker's overall commitment to the Reformation. For not only did Hooker not hold to episcopacy as the *esse* of the Church but he also argued that "touching the ministries of the Gospell" the whole church should be divided into "laitie and clergie" with the clergy being subdivided into "Presbiters or Deacons". In this context Hooker goes on to defend his use of the term presbyter claiming that he would rather "terme the one sort presbiters than Priests" because "in truth the word Presbyter do seem more fitt, and in proprietie of speech more agreeable then Priest with the whole gospell of Jesus Christ".<sup>108</sup> Hooker's preference for the term presbyter is based on his understanding that "sacrifice is now no part of the Church ministerie". In his discussions on the Eucharist Hooker repudiated the classical Thomist definition of the Mass sacrifice preferring instead to argue that "the reall presence of Christes most blessed bodie and blood is not therefore to be sought for in the sacrament, but in the worthie receiver of the sacrament".<sup>109</sup> To be sure Marshall recognises this aspect of Hooker's teaching and accordingly rather grudgingly admits that this led Hooker to "modify" the catholic doctrine of the priesthood and to also "modify" its sacramental doctrine.<sup>110</sup> It is, however, unlikely that Jewel, Hooker, Calvin and Luther would have agreed that

Reformed teaching should be seen as a mere modification of a traditional Catholic approach.

There is yet a further historical argument that can be levelled against J.S. Marshall. If it is true that Hooker's views on episcopacy were at the centre of an Elizabethan consensus then it is not surprising that there existed warm fraternal relations between the Church of England and the continental Lutherans and Calvinists; relations that were to last even into the seventeenth century when episcopacy was being emphasised as something still retained by the Church of England but abandoned by the Reformed churches abroad. This fact is significant given that the Church of England was looked up to not only as "the chief and most flourishing of all the protestant churches" but also as the "the bulwark of protestantism".<sup>111</sup> Indeed so warm were the relations between the various protestant churches that there was an interchangeability of ministers, with clergy canonically, but not episcopally ordained, serving in the Church of England.<sup>112</sup> A particular case in point is that provided by Hadrian a Saravia, a Dutch Calvinist, a theological professor at Leyden who fled to England and without being reordained held a number of livings and even ministered to Hooker as he was dying. Obviously Saravia did not detect any significant doctrinal ambiguities between the Reformed Churches and the Church of England.<sup>113</sup> But if Marshall's view of Hooker as the father of an Anglican Tradition that would have to a view of episcopacy as the *esse* of the Church and to a view of priesthood similar to St Thomas then it would have been extremely unlikely that such warm relations would have existed. But the fact that they did exist points to the conclusion that

Hooker's view of Tradition and ministry was closer to a Reformed understanding than Marshall is willing to admit. Furthermore it would appear that by so emphasising Hooker's view of the bishops as the successors to the Apostles, without, at the same time discussing Hooker's willingness to see that, in extreme circumstances, it might even be legitimate to have a church with no Episcopate at all Marshall is himself in danger of "misdistinguishing" between "matters of discipline and Church-government" and "matters necessarie to salvation".

## Chapter Four

### Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture

#### 4.1 *Introduction*

In turning our attention to our final problem of the due weight to be attributed to Scriptural authority it is not surprising to find that, once again, claims are made that the Hookerian *qua* Anglican approach was one that was, in its essentials, different from the approach adopted by the Reformation in general. Naturally the assertions made in this context build extensively on the premises already discussed in relation to Reason and Tradition. The argument claims that because Hooker's view of Reason and Tradition was anything but explicitly Reformed, his views on Scriptural authority are anything but explicitly Reformed. This is so because to the mixture of nuanced Reason and Tradition is added Hooker's nuanced view of biblical authority ("very different from that which passed for orthodox among most Elizabethan protestants") and the end result is a "typically Anglican perspective balancing the authority of Scripture, reason and tradition, and [with Hooker] employing his own balanced logical and rhetorical style".<sup>1</sup> Once again we are being given the grounds on the basis of which is erected the declaration that the Church of England is a "Church of Reconciliation", a Church of the *via media*, a Church in which "there lay a profounder impulse...aiming to introduce into religion, and to base upon the "light of reason", that love of balance, restraint, moderation, measure...".<sup>2</sup>

As we have seen from our study so far however, we should be cautious in accepting uncritically this reading of Hooker in particular and Anglicanism in general. The implication, as always, is that Hooker stood between Rome and the Reformation and as such was committed to the doctrinal principles of neither but was instead altruistically pursuing truth and avoiding all extremes. To be sure, this has recently been called into question but there is still a considerable body of opinion that continues to read Hooker in this way.<sup>3</sup> Its success is largely dependent on drawing close parallels between Puritan theologians and Calvin and asserting that the former were merely following the latter in all essentials and simply accepting the often unfounded, tacit assumption that Hooker's opponents were the theological conduit by which Calvin's theology, pure and undefiled, flowed into England. As a result a simplistic attitude is adopted that takes up a narrow strand of disciplinarian theology and inflates it to embrace the whole of Reformed orthodoxy. Thus, in reference to Scripture we find that Hooker did not hold to the "normal Elizabethan protestant view of the relations between the authority of scripture and the authority of the church" and that he was attempting to "assault a number of attitudes central to the whole evangelical Calvinist view of the world".<sup>4</sup> Naturally once this argument is accepted it can be used to prise Hooker away from an explicitly Reformed position on any matter be it scripture, the church, predestination, eucharistic theology or justification but it can do so only in ways that fail to see Hooker's continuity with explicitly Reformed thinking and his distance from disciplinarian modes of thought. In so doing questionable conclusions are reached but always on the same grounds, namely

that Disciplinary theology is wholly compatible with mainstream Reformed theology.

It is not surprising therefore, that this same argument is used in conjunction with Hooker's doctrine of Scripture. It is well known that Hooker did not hold to a view of Scripture that demanded biblical warrant for every action. He rejected, in other words, Scripture's "omnicompetence". The Puritans, on the other hand, did not do so. "Following continental Reformed tutors they judged that, in Calvin's words, "the misshapen ruins" of human reason, "choked with dense ignorance...cannot come forth effectively".<sup>5</sup> Hence, so the argument goes, they had to hold to Scripture's "omnicompetence" because reason was not a trustworthy guide. All this is true as far as it goes but it does not go far enough and the implication is twofold. Firstly, whilst it is true to say that Hooker did not view Scripture as omniscient it implies that he did not do so because he did not hold to a Reformed view of the fall.<sup>6</sup> In other words he did not "follow continental Reformed tutors". This is untrue. Hooker's view of the fall was impeccably orthodox. Like the continental Reformers and unlike his Puritan opponents he held to a view of the fall that necessitated Divine revelation in order to secure salvation but not in trivial matters of every day life. Secondly it also implies that because Calvin spoke of "the misshapen ruins" of reason he would also have adopted the doctrine of Scripture's omniscience. This is also untrue. As we have seen Calvin held to Scripture where it spoke but was otherwise content to follow reason or tradition. Read as it stands, however, the impression is given that Hooker stands twice removed from "continental

Reformed tutors" on both the doctrinal matters of the fall and scripture. In actual fact it is Hooker and the "Reformed tutors" who are twice removed from the presbyterianising Puritans who wrenched the Reformed view of the fall out of its proper context and in consequence were constrained to enlarge the use of Scripture beyond its proper bounds and limits.

All this raises deep-seated assumptions about Hooker and his theological position in the Elizabethan Church. In order to proceed in our investigation we shall continue to adopt the same procedure that we have used in previous chapters. We shall examine the Puritan approach to Scripture before investigating Hooker's position. Having done this we shall glance at our two magisterial Reformers, Luther and Calvin, and examine their approach to Scripture, before concluding with an attempt to see if Hooker's approach is at all close to the architects of the mainstream Reformation. We shall then be able to judge if Hooker was really attempting to disparage and reduce the Reformation's theological achievement or if, on the contrary, he was seeking to defend and protect it from those who were undermining it, whilst at the same time protesting their innocence and claiming to be the real inheritors of Reformed orthodoxy and the real disciples of Calvin.

#### 4.2 *The Puritans and Scripture*

In 1572 the Puritans presented their *Admonition to Parliament*. It is the first clear written statement of the Puritan objections to the Church of England

established by Elizabeth. As such, it is a significant document, for it not only marks a definite step in the organisation of the Puritan movement but it also displays what lay at the heart of Puritan discontent. The pamphlet opens with a two-fold call to Parliament, not only to abandon "all popish remnants both in ceremonies and government" but also, on a more positive note, "to bring in and place in God's church those things only which the Lord himself in His Word commandeth."<sup>7</sup> The *Admonition* continues in the following sentence to equate this two-fold process as inseparable, claiming that it is "not enough to take pains in taking away evil" without at the same time being "occupied in placing good in the stead thereof."<sup>8</sup> What immediately becomes apparent from this document is the Puritan insistence, emphasised again and again, upon the function of the Scriptures in the life of the Church. In assessing the depth of reform in the English Church the authors of the *Admonition* asserted that "we in England are so far off from having a Church rightly reformed, according to the prescript of God's Word, that as yet we are not come to the outward face of the same."<sup>9</sup> The *Admonition* is an explosive document. The authors were convinced that the Church of England was so distant from the Reformation that the minimal amount of reform she had experienced thus far had not even begun to scratch the surface or "outward face".<sup>10</sup> Hence the *Admonition* attacked and undermined the whole liturgical and hierarchical structure of the Church of England. For these Puritans it simply was not adequate to demand that freedom was to be allowed in the construction of Church government provided that nothing was done contrary to the Scriptures. Rather, there had to be express biblical warrant for anything undertaken in the Church and no credence or reliability could be attributed either



to man's reason or to the inherited tradition. Thus the *Admonition* is sprinkled throughout with exhortations "to bring in and place in God's Church those things only, which the Lord Himself in His Word commandeth," "...that nothing be done in this or any other thing, but that which you have express warrant of God's Word for."<sup>11</sup>

But if this is an adequate reflection of the Disciplinary approach to Scripture it must not be thought that the positive commitment to Scripture evidenced in the *Admonition* sprang up over-night. It is instructive for our purposes, in seeking to understand the Puritans' total commitment to the Scriptures, to see how there developed a slow but steady movement towards the use of Scripture adopted by the *Admonition*. According to H.G. Reventlow there is a developing and a hardening attitude that can be traced beginning with William Tyndale ("the founder of English Puritanism"), through William Turner and John Hooper until it reaches its apex in Thomas Cartwright.<sup>12</sup> Reventlow's argument pinpoints the steps these Reformers took in their increasing exaltation of the Scriptures. Tyndale begins by largely following Luther: one is justified by grace through faith without the works of the law. As Tyndale began his translations of the Old Testament however, a more positive approach to the law began to manifest itself. Admittedly the ceremonial law is no longer valid but all the other laws moral and judicial are beginning to play a more prominent part. This idea was still with Tyndale at the end of his life when he began to develop a consistent theology of the covenant. According to this,

"all the promyses thorow out the hole scripture do include a couenant. That is: god byndeth him selfe to fulfil that mercie vnto thee, onlye if thou wilt endeuore thyselfe to keep his lawes".<sup>13</sup>

Tyndale has now moved from his previous Lutheran position. God is now bound by his promise, not unconditionally in Christ, but by the individual's fulfilment of the law; God will remain faithful to him on condition that he fulfils the law. But it did not take long before Tyndale was expanding this conception into a full blown national covenant theology. The people of England were bound to obey their own national, temporal and local laws just as the Old Testament people of God were bound to obey and keep their own laws. Reventlow perceptively writes "thus the Old Testament, and especially Deuteronomy, takes on the character of a direct model for contemporary English politics".<sup>14</sup>

The position that Tyndale had hammered out was to have dramatic and long term effects. In Tyndale's mature theology the English nation state is bound in a covenant structure similar to the Old Testament people of God. We are now moving steadily to a position which regards the Old and New Testaments as standing on an equal level with little appreciation of Old Testament typology and Christological foreshadowing. This was taken up almost at once. At the close of Henry's reign William Turner wrote *The Huntying and Finding out of the Romish Fox*.<sup>15</sup> If, in Tyndale's theology, the English nation state was bound to the obedience of God's law in Scripture, then this was especially true of the Church. As a result the Bible begins to reign supreme in all matters. As the Bible was used to throw off Roman dominion then it must also be used to throw off the remnants of the "Romish Fox" still present. In this area Turner isolated many aspects of worship that all the mainstream Reformers wished to abolish (the Latin form of the Mass, prayers for the dead and so on) but he also began to

move into areas that were indifferent such as the sign of the cross. These indifferent matters the mainstream Reformers were content to let be. But Turner felt that all signs of the cross should be removed from parish Churches on the basis that to worship before an image is, in effect, to worship it. Interestingly, Turner reached his conclusions on the basis of Old Testament texts, namely Exodus 20:4, Leviticus 20:1, Deuteronomy 4:15-19; 27:15 and 5:8. In Turner, then, we have reached the position where the Old Testament is beginning to legislate and bind the Church even in matters indifferent. As Hooker was later to write "their common ordinarie practise is, to quote by-speeches in some historicall narration or other, and to urge them as if they were written in most exact forme of lawe".<sup>16</sup>

Once William Turner began to employ the Scriptures in this way it was a comparatively easy step for John Hooper to enlarge the use of Scripture. Whereas Turner was content to use the Scriptures to prohibit certain practices such as the use of the cross in worship, Hooper was to use the Bible in a much more positive and demanding way. His article *The Regulative Principle and Things Indifferent* was written in defence of his refusal to wear vestments when nominated for the See of Gloucester in 1550. Gone is the common Reformation postulate, fully developed by Melancthon and adhered to by Luther and Calvin, that distinguishes between matters indifferent and doctrine. Hooper begins by arguing that

"nothing should be used in the Church which has not either the express Word of God to support it, or otherwise is a thing indifferent in itself, which brings no profit when done or used, but no harm when not done or admitted".<sup>17</sup>

Whilst appearing to hold an appreciation of the distinction between matters of doctrine and order (after all Hooper does mention Scripture and then "things indifferent"), this is, in fact, completely undermined on two fronts. Firstly anything used in the worship of the Church must now have "the express Word of God to support it".<sup>18</sup> No longer is Hooper content with the usual Reformation principle that anything can be used provided it is not contrary to Scripture. Secondly, and following naturally on from the first premise, this in effect obliterates things indifferent in worship. For if every thing must now have express biblical warrant there is no room left in which matters indifferent are free to operate. Hooper goes on to make this more explicit. In the first "condition" or "token" which he lays down to distinguish which things are genuinely indifferent he writes

"Indifferent things must have their origin and foundation in the word of God. For what cannot be proved from the Word of God is not of faith, for faith depends on hearing the word of God (Rom. 10). But what is not of faith cannot be any mediate and indifferent thing, but, as Scripture says, is really sin (Rom. 14), and that which cannot please God, is for that reason also to be rooted up, like the plant which the heavenly Father hath not planted (Matt. 15), and must be cherished by no man."<sup>19</sup>

Thus, as Reventlow argues, the area to be governed by scripture is enormously enlarged.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore in Hooper the concept of the covenant becomes more pronounced and legalistic. Whereas both Tyndale and Turner had a concept of the covenant that still maintained a dual covenant with both Adam and Christ, in Hooper this has now been collapsed into a single covenant with Adam. For him, this covenant with Adam binds all the people of God both in the Old and New Testaments in precisely the same way. It follows, therefore, that the New Testament Church is bound to a legalistic view of the Old Testament. Grace is

now conditional on the obedient observance of all of God's laws in both Old and New Testaments.<sup>21</sup> Even Cranmer becomes exasperated. He writes, "It is not commanded in Scripture to kneel, and whatsoever is not commanded in Scripture is against the Scripture and utterly unlawful and ungodly."<sup>22</sup>

Hooper's *The Regulative Principle* has been read as the document which "above all illuminates the relationship of the radical Puritans to the Bible".<sup>23</sup> As such it established the position adopted by Thomas Cartwright in his dispute with Whitgift. As Cartwright's position was the one Hooker responds to directly, it is necessary to examine his theology in this matter in some detail.<sup>24</sup>

The first point to note is that Cartwright adopts Hooper's stance in *The Regulative Principle* that anything not done out of a direct sense of obedience to God is in fact sin because it cannot proceed from faith which can only come by the hearing of God's word. Commenting on I Corinthians 10 Cartwright had argued that

"Nothing can be done to the glorie of God without obedience: all thinges doone without the Testymonye off God are without obedience: therefore nothing doone without the testymonye off the word off God can be done to the Glory of God".<sup>25</sup>

Cartwright however was to extend this argument much further. Taken at its face value, Cartwright is drawing a very close connection between the "testymonye off God" and "the word off God". In fact, so close is the connection that "the testymonye of God" means, for all practical purposes, "the word off God" and the "word off God" means Scripture. At this point Cartwright's argument has left no scope for any action to be taken without an express literal warrant of

Scripture. But it must be emphasised that Cartwright does not have in view the duty that devolves upon a fallen humanity to obey the "word off God" and to give glory to God by submitting in repentance and faith to the message of the gospel. Cartwright's scope is much wider. He has extended the role of Scripture to such an extent that "nothing can be doone" in any part of the individual's life that is not directed, controlled and influenced by Scripture. Indeed Cartwright had argued that where faith is lacking, sin is present. Furthermore, as faith can be only exercised in reliance upon God's word, it follows that if any action is taken without specific direction from that word, faith is lacking and thus sin is present. As a result Cartwright has not only enlarged the role of Scripture, he has also, as a consequence, enlarged the role of faith. Faith is not now to be exercised in its daily recourse to (and dependence upon) Christ and the benefits of salvation that are extended to the individual in the words of Scripture. Rather faith is to be exercised in its recourse to Scripture to find biblical texts to support any actions that one may be contemplating. As we shall see, in Hooker's view such a position could be nothing but disastrous.

Cartwright has now constructed his theological framework on the grounds largely already established for him by his predecessors. But he is now compelled by the logic of his position to take a further step. He was offended by the Conformist argument that sought to restrict the use of Scripture to the purpose for which it was written. Great injury is done to Scripture, Cartwright thought,

"to pinne it in so narrowe roume as that it should be able to direct us but in the principall poyntes of oure religion or as though the substance of religion or some rude and unfashioned matter of building of the church

were uttered in them and those things were left out that should pertaine to the forme and fashion of it: or as if there were in the scriptures onely to cover her nakednes and not also chaines and bracelettes and rings and other iewelless to adorne her and set hir oute or that to conclude there were sufficient to quench hir thirst and kill hir hunger but not to minister unto hir a more liberall and (as it were) a more delicious and daintie diet".<sup>26</sup>

The problem that confronted Cartwright however was one that was necessitated by his wish to provide the Church with a more liberal, delicious and dainty diet. Where was this diet to be found? How could the Church be more beautifully adorned? The solution that Cartwright offered was to apply to the Old Testament.<sup>27</sup>

For obvious reasons, the Old Testament could be used to provide the wealth of detail that was singularly lacking in the New Testament. In his *Letter to Arthur Hildersham*, Cartwright was attempting to give "direction in the study of divinity". In this letter, Cartwright argued that no individual Christian was to bind his judgement to any "Father or Rabbi here upon earth" but

"onely to the Holy men of God, which spake and wrote by the Holy Spirit of God, and whom God had chosen to be his Publick Notaries, and Recorders of his good pleasure towards us, whom he did sit by, and as it were continually hold their hands whiles they were in writing".<sup>28</sup>

Whilst this can be read as an orthodox view of biblical inspiration it was the use to which Cartwright puts this doctrine that raised problems for his Conformist adversaries. In Cartwright's hands the doctrine of inspiration is so manipulated that no attempt is made to distinguish between the various genres present in the biblical text. Hooker was later to complain that more often than not when Scripture delivered historical information that was often construed as if it was "legally meant".<sup>29</sup> On this basis both Old and New Testaments are, in

Cartwright's words, "two Breasts alike melch, so they may be also drawn alike, course by course and one after the other".<sup>30</sup> Naturally Cartwright was sensitive enough to realise that the Old Testament ceremonial law was still no longer binding upon the Church; his hatred of Roman practices would have assured him of that much. But beyond this concession Cartwright was reluctant to go. To do so would, Cartwright thought, render redundant much biblical material that the Church could use in guiding the magistrate to construct a godly nation. For example the use to which the Old Testament was put in the whole question of Henry VIII's divorce was still living memory. But even beyond this there lay a whole complex of questions in the public domain to which the Old Testament could still provide direction, guidance and instruction. The treatment of idolatry and heresy, the persecution of witches and the charging of interest were still contentious issues. To be sure, Cartwright has now moved beyond what would normally be considered the specific interest of adorning and beautifying the Church and into the area of civil rule that should, in most circumstances, be the responsibility of the godly prince but, as we have already seen, the Puritans were loath to distinguish between the realm of grace and of nature and this was half the problem. Be that as it may, with a wealth of biblical material, albeit Old Testament biblical material, Cartwright was determined, in line with the Puritan ambition to let Christ "rule and reign...by the sceptre of his Word only", to allow free scope to the full rigour of Old Testament judicial law.<sup>31</sup> Writing in his *A Reply to an Answer* Cartwright had argued that the magistrate was bound to follow Old Testament prerogatives for

"...to say that any magistrate can save the life of blasphemers, contemptuous and stubborn idolaters, murderers, adulterers, incestuous persons, and such like, which God by his judicial law hath commanded to



be put to death I do utterly deny, and am ready to prove,....And therefore, although the judicial laws are permitted to the discretion of the prince and the magistrate, yet not so generally as you seem to affirm, and, as I have oftentimes said, that not only must it not be done against the word, but according to the word, and by it."<sup>32</sup>

We have now arrived at the crux of the Puritan understanding of Scripture. In Cartwright's mature theology, and indeed in the developing theology of Puritanism, there is a great reticence to admit that some portions of Scripture may be abrogated and no longer explicitly and directly applicable either to the Church or to society. Admittedly it was confessed on all sides of the debate that the Old Testament ceremonial law had been abolished in Christ, but this of course was duly replaced by the Presbyterian discipline of consistorial lay elders. And it was necessary that this should be the case. For Cartwright it was inconceivable, and contrary to the whole drift of Scripture with its continual emphasis on the increasing nature of God's self-disclosure until it reaches its apex in Christ, that the Old Testament people of God should have been given exact and precise details over the minutiae of everyday life and yet this be apparently denied, in the New Testament era of full revelation, to the New Testament Church and society. On this foundation Cartwright had accused the Conformists of wishing to "shrink the arms of scripture" which otherwise are "so long and large". In opposition to this Cartwright continues,

"I say that the word of God containeth the direction of all things pertaining to the church, yea, of whatsoever things fall into any part of man's life".<sup>33</sup>

Hooker was later to challenge his Puritan detractors on this precise point, of whether "Scripture is the onely rule of all things which in this life may be done by men".<sup>34</sup> For, Hooker relates, Cartwright had gone on to elaborate that "whatsoever things fall into any part of man's life" meant that Scripture "must be

the rule to direct in all things, even so farre as to the taking up of a rush or strawe".<sup>35</sup> In the Puritans' universe there did not exist an area of life that was exempt from the supreme, overarching and controlling activity of God's word in Holy Scripture. Scripture therefore came to be regarded essentially as a book of law, giving expression of God's will in all matters economic, political, judicial and even sartorial.

It naturally follows from this that nothing can be done on the basis of mere human discretion and wisdom. As Cartwright had already pointed out, anything that did not proceed from faith in God's inscripturated word was sin and in that case did not proceed from faith, but rather its opposite, unbelief. In that case, were men free to do those things in which there was no direct commandment in Scripture either positively or negatively? To this question Cartwright provided a clear answer by drawing first of all a distinction between human and divine authority. He readily conceded that when it comes to human authority there is a true indifference for it is "no good argument to say, it is not true because Aristotle or Plato said it not".<sup>36</sup> Clearly Cartwright is arguing that things may be true even though not mentioned by the world's greatest philosophers, and that simply because as human beings they could not encompass all knowledge. Likewise, and for the same reason, one cannot say "it is true because they said so". In matters of this sort one may achieve a true neutrality

"because the infirmity of man can neither attain to the perfection of any thing whereby he might speak all things that are to be spoken of it, neither yet be free from error in those things which he speaketh or giveth out; and therefore this argument neither affirmatively nor negatively compelleth the hearer, but only induceth him to some liking or misliking of that for which it is brought, and is rather for an orator to persuade the simpler sort, than for a disputer to enforce him that is learned."<sup>37</sup>

Cartwright is now in a commanding position. If this is the case with respect to mere human authorities, Aristotle and Plato, is it likely that it would also be the case with respect to Divine authority? Cartwright does not think so and roundly rejects such a proposition. God, he reasons, is able to set before man a perfect form of his church. Not only is God able to do so, he has, in point of fact, done it; and this without diminution or neglect. It follows, then, that here there can be no real neutrality. Here a man must reason "both ways necessarily". Cartwright continues,

"The Lord hath commanded it should be in his church; therefore it must: and of the other side: He hath not commanded; therefore it must not be."<sup>38</sup>

Here we have the Puritan exegetical principal clearly stated. One only has freedom to do what God explicitly commands. If God has not prescribed anything either one way or the other, either positively or negatively, he has not commanded it and "it must not be".

It is now possible to isolate the main sinews of the Puritan doctrine of Scripture which confronted Hooker as it had been developed and expanded through seminal thinkers from the time of William Tyndale through to Thomas Cartwright. There are two basic observations to make. First of all, it is interesting to note the position the Old Testament begins to play in the theology of these Reformers. As we have seen Tyndale, in stressing the English nation state's covenantal obligation to God, was inexorably led to place a growing emphasis on the continuing validity of Old Testament law. Once this step had been taken there was a corresponding demand for the English Church and nation

to observe, in Archbishop Whitgift's words, the "judicials of Moses" without adding to or subtracting from them.<sup>39</sup> The effect of this was to read the Old Testament, not in the way that it might prefigure or point to Christ, but rather as a legally binding document. Secondly, it was inevitable that this should lead to a demand that any thing done in the Church should have specific warrant in Scripture. If it did not possess this permissive authority it was as if Scripture had effectively commanded it not to be done. On these grounds the Disciplinarians demanded three concessions from the Church of England. Firstly everything must have positive commandment in Scripture. Secondly the whole of Scripture was to be taken into account with both Testaments being read as if "legally" and not "historically meant". And thirdly that if Scripture did not command a course of action it was to be read as if Scripture had expressly forbidden it and therefore it was not to be taken.

It is to the questions raised by this position that Hooker directs his answer. To that we must now turn.

#### 4.3 *Richard Hooker and Scripture*

When Hooker was confronted by these demands he realised that the "head theorem of all their discourses" had been articulated by Cartwright in his debates with Archbishop Whitgift. In that debate, as we have seen, Cartwright had insisted that "Scripture is the onely rule of all things which in this life may be done by men." Whitgift had ignored the momentous implications behind that

statement by lamely countering that "nothing ought to be done in the Church, or in the life of men, contrary to the Word of God." But Hooker realised that such an answer was completely inadequate to satisfy the Puritan conscience. For one thing it failed to take into account that Cartwright, Travers and all their supporters were committed to the Bible completely and positively and that any actions perceived merely to be not contrary to the Word of God did not, for them, bear the imprimatur of Divine approval. Thus, for the Puritan, to perform any action not directed immediately by Scripture was sinful and could not be tolerated. It is this that Whitgift had failed to grasp and consequently he must have been rather hopeful that his admission that nothing should be done contrary to Scripture would have been enough to quieten Thomas Cartwright. But this was not to happen because the Conformist's double negative "not against" or "not repugnant to" Scripture expressed a relationship with Scripture that could only be, for the Puritan, of an indirect and incidental kind.<sup>40</sup> For Hooker's opponents this was totally unsatisfactory and it reflected a less than whole-hearted commitment to Scripture.<sup>41</sup>

As Hooker reflected on the Puritans' demands he realised that there existed an underlying epistemological anxiety and insecurity. Those who were insisting that the Church of England should follow the examples of the best Reformed Churches and institute, in obedience to Divine command, the Presbyterian eldership, were unable to assure themselves that they were doing God's will unless it was done in direct obedience to Scripture. Truth, therefore, could only be discovered if it was immediately read off the surface of the biblical

text, because it was only if it was obtained in this way that the individual could have the assurance that he was not sinning and was performing God's will. Were those who adopted the Genevan polity completely wrong when they argued in this way? Hooker did not think so, although he qualified their arguments to a large extent. Hooker agreed that it almost seemed to be a condition of the fall that we suffer from anxiety and insecurity. "The truth is", Hooker writes, "that the mind of man desireth evermore to knowe the truth according to the most infallible certainty which the nature of things can yield".<sup>42</sup> Hooker, then, can sympathise with the anxiety that confronts the Puritans but believes that the insecurity can be partly relieved provided that the "certainty" being craved is proportionable to that which the "nature of things can yield". In order to do this Hooker identifies three levels on which the basis of truth can be erected. On the first level exists the greatest assurance that is generally accepted by all and that is what we have "by plaine aspect and intuitive beholding". On this level truth can be grasped "generally" by "all" because it is obvious, open and accessible. On the second level Hooker places the truth which can be reached via "strong and invincible demonstration". This level of truth is not as easy to obtain as the first level; it is, after all, dependent upon strong and invincible demonstration and those demonstrations have to be weighed and examined before individual assent is given. But what happens if these two levels fail and there arises a situation in which a truth is presented that cannot be obtained either through intuition or demonstration? Hooker says that in these cases the mind inclines to the "way greatest probability leadeth".

It must be remembered that Hooker, at this point, is trying to resolve the Puritan's over-scrupulous conscience. In the Preface Hooker had stated that his "whole endeavor" was "to resolve the conscience, and to shewe as neere as [he could] what in this controversie the hart [was] to thinke".<sup>43</sup> Due to this intention Hooker went on to agree with the Puritans that there was a level of truth that lay beyond "intuitive beholding", "invincible demonstration" and "greatest probability". And that was Scripture. Hooker continues,

"Scripture with Christian men being received as the word of God, that for which we have probable, yea, that which have necessary reason for, yea, that which we see with our eies is not thought so sure as that which the scripture of God teacheth; because wee hold that his speech revealeth there what himselfe seeth and therefore the strongest prooffe of all, and the most necessarily assented unto by us (which do thus receive the scripture) is the scripture."<sup>44</sup>

In Hooker's hands then Scripture becomes the basis of the "strongest proof of all". It has been suggested, however, that although Hooker could speak in very exalted terms about the authority and sufficiency of Scripture, he was constantly undermining this either by speaking of "the autonomous action of human reason to decode its message" or by an over reliance on the testimony of the Church.<sup>45</sup> It was nevertheless necessary for Hooker to stress the full authority of Scripture because he was still maintaining the Church of England's defence against the Church of Rome. When Hooker was guarding this defence he was as protestant as any Puritan could wish. He constantly underscored the "absolute perfection of scripture". "The schooles of Rome", Hooker complained,

"teach scripture to be so insufficient, as if, except traditions were added, it did not containe all revealed and supernaturall truth, which absolutely is necessarie for the children of men in this life to know that they may in the next be saved."<sup>46</sup>

As we have seen in our previous chapter Hooker was insistent that neither he nor the Church of England so revered tradition that they yielded to it "the same obedience and reverence" as they did to God's "written lawe".<sup>47</sup> In Hooker's thought it was "unlawfull, impious, [and] execrable" to "urge any thing as part of that supernaturall and celestiallie revealed truth" upon the Church "and not to shewe it in scripture".<sup>48</sup> Hooker might well have had in mind Article VI of the Church of England, established by Convocation in 1563 and doctrinally binding on all clergy. Article VI is headed "Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures" and it makes the exact point being established by Hooker. "Holy Scripture", the Article asserts, "containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that what is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith".<sup>49</sup> Thus both Hooker and the Article's main quarrel with the Roman Catholicism of his day was two fold. First of all it was imagined that the "generall and main drift of sacred scripture" was not as large as in fact it was and secondly that God did not "intend to deliver" a "full instruction in all things unto salvation necessary". As a consequence Rome was tempted either "to look for new revelations from heaven" in order to make up Scripture's poverty or "dangerously to ad to the word of God uncertaine tradition" so that the doctrine of man's salvation may be made complete. For Hooker, as for all the Reformers,

"The testimonies of God are true, the testimonies of God are perfect, the testimonies of God are all sufficient unto that end for which they were geven. Therefore accordingly we do receive them, we do not thinke that in them God hath omitted any thing needful unto his purpose, and left his intent to be accomplished by our divisinges. What the Scripture purposeth the same in al pointes it doth performe".<sup>50</sup>



On this doctrinal foundation Hooker is quick to challenge Rome whenever she relied on extra-scriptural sources and to all intents and purposes treated them as Scripture.<sup>51</sup>

Hooker's confidence in Scripture as "the strongest proof of all", however, rests on a thorough-going doctrine of verbal inspiration. Hooker would have concurred with Cartwright's *Letter to Arthur Hildersham* in which, as we have seen, the biblical authors were said to have written Scripture with the Holy Spirit, as it were, "continually holding their hands".<sup>52</sup> Hooker says much the same thing. In his first *Sermon on Jude* he includes an extensive passage in which he describes the way the Scriptures came to be written. Hooker teaches that the men who wrote Scripture were not taught "the knowledge of that they spake" nor "the utterance of that they knew" by "usual" and "ordinary meanes". Generally speaking, men learn through the ministry of others "which lead us along like children from a letter to a syllable, from a syllable to a word, from a word to a line, from a line to a sentence, from a sentence to a side, and so turn over".<sup>53</sup> But this was most certainly not the case with those who wrote Scripture. "God himselfe was their instructor" and so they became "acquainted even with the secret and hidden counsels of God".<sup>54</sup> Possessed in this way with "lightned...eies of understanding" it might be thought that a lapse could occur between the Divine knowledge now injected into and held in the heart of the prophet and the moment of its transmission. Hooker concedes that this is often what happens with human thought. Very often "when we have conceived a thing in our hearts" great "travaile" and "paines" need to be taken in order that what

we have understood is properly received by others. Even then "our tongues do faulter within our mouthes" and "wee disgrace the dreadfull mysteries of our faith and grieve the spirit of our hearers by words unsavoury, and unseemly speeches".<sup>55</sup> The "speech" of Scripture however is of a different order. God "did so miraculously himselfe frame and fashion" the "wordes and writings" of the prophets that, Hooker continues quoting St Paul, in Scripture we have received "not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God", neither have we received the "words which mans wisdom teacheth, but which the holy Ghost doth teach".<sup>56</sup> Hooker further elaborates on this subject and explains how it was that in Scripture we have the "words which the holy Ghost doth teach". God gave his prophets scrolls to eat, Hooker explains,

"not because God fed them with inke, and paper, but to teach us, that so oft as he employed them in this heavenly worke, they neither spake, nor wrote any worde of their owne, but uttered sillable by sillable as the spirit put it into their mouths, no otherwise than the Harp or the Lute doth give a sound according to the discretion of his hands that holdeth it and striketh it with skill".<sup>57</sup>

As elaborated, Hooker's doctrine of the plenary inspiration of Scripture can exist side by side with a similar doctrine held not only by the Puritans but indeed by all the Reformers. Indeed, Hooker is even prepared to argue that because the Scriptures are a product of Divine handiwork it is natural they should share in some of the Divine attributes. Because God cannot err and make mistakes and because he always tells the truth, then the same is true of Scripture. It also cannot fail to be true and it cannot deceive.

"God him selfe can neither possibly erre, nor leade into error. For this cause his testimonies, whatsoever he affirmeth, are alwaies truth and most infallible certaintie. Yea further, because the things that proceed from him are perfect without any manner of defect or maime; it cannot be but that

the wordes of his mouth are absolute, and lack nothing which they should have, for performance of that thing whereunto they tend".<sup>58</sup>

With this sure grasp on the Reformed doctrine of Scriptural inspiration it is hardly surprising that the authors of the *Christian Letter* did not try to call into question Hooker's doctrine on this particular score. They realised that Hooker was not vulnerable to attack at this level but what is interesting is the way in which Hooker, in his marginal notes, brings the attack to them. At every opportunity Hooker challenged attempts to elevate sources outside Scripture to the same authoritative standing as Scripture and in his polemic with Rome this is a feature of Hooker's theology. But the same is also true with his polemic against the Puritans. It is well known that the Puritans had an exalted view of the preaching office and this becomes apparent in point twelve of the *Christian Letter*. They strongly objected to the then current practise of conformist clergy to read homilies rather than preaching. The Puritans taught, rightly, that "the true preaching of the word is an essential note of the church" and in their understanding of the parable of the sower they wrote that "the Preachers of the worde are seede sowers, the seede is the worde of God".<sup>59</sup> Here the word of God is so identified with the preacher's message that the word of God becomes synonymous with the sermon. Immediately Hooker objected on the same grounds that he opposed similar Roman tendencies to treat that which was not Scripture as Scripture. Hooker retorts,

"If sermons be the word of God in the same sense that scriptures are his word, if there be no difference between preaching and prophecying, no ods between thapostles of Christ and the preaching ministers of every congregation as touching that forme of delivering doctrine which did exempt both the speeches and writings of thapostles from possibility of error, then must we hold that Calvines sermons are holy scripture. You would not have homilies read in the Church because nothing should be

there read but the word of God. How shall this stand with your doctrine that sermons are Gods word no lesse then scriptures?"<sup>60</sup>

Hooker goes on to suggest that the Puritans should be content to have their sermons regarded as in conformity with Scripture and not to say that their sermons are that word. Otherwise Puritan sermons would be "as very great authority as if they had come from the very mouth of Christ him selfe" and then, Hooker sarcastically concludes, "let the people applaud unto you and when you speak cry mainly out The voice of God and not of man".<sup>61</sup>

The contours of Hooker's doctrine of Scripture are at certain essential points remarkably similar to the doctrine held by his theological opponents. Both held to the belief that the mind of man desires to know the truth with the most "infallible certainty". Both agreed that Scripture provides the basis for the "strongest proof of all". Both agreed that Scripture provided such full and complete knowledge that it was unnecessary to accept the traditions of the Church as a supplement to that knowledge. Both agreed that Scripture was Divinely inspired; in Cartwright's words God held the hands of those engaged in writing Scripture, in Hooker's words men spoke syllable by syllable as God put words into their mouths. And yet, despite these great similarities, there existed such crucial and essential differences that those who did not consider the Church as having even begun the work of reformation and those who regarded the Church as already reformed, faced each other over an increasing divide.

It needs to be said, first of all, that Hooker was correct when he perceived that the Puritans' "first position" in urging reformation in the Church of England was "that scripture is the onely rule of all things which in this life may be

done by men". The Puritans' dedication to this theological principle sprang from a desire, shared by the conformist, "to knowe the truth according to the most "infallible certainty which the nature of things can yeeld". As we have seen Hooker himself also had this anxiety but, in his thought, "certainty" had to bear a close correlation to the "nature of things". This is a fundamental key to a proper appreciation of Hooker's theology and it deserves close examination.

Hooker was persuaded of the full sufficiency and authority of Scripture. It was to Scripture that the first place both of credit and obedience was due and so, even though "ten thousand generall Councils" should "set downe one definitive sentence concerning any point of religion whatsoever", then it could not be but that should "one manifest testimony cited from the mouth of God to the contrary" exist, it "could not chose but overweigh them all".<sup>62</sup> Hooker was most concerned to protect the supreme and final authority of Scripture and this concern led him to oppose the Disciplinary use of Scripture which, he thought, could not but ultimately undermine Scripture's authority in as complete a way as was being accomplished in the Church of Rome. For whilst Rome only looked at Scripture as an incomplete form of revealed truth, the Puritans, "justly condemning this opinion", moved in the opposite direction into a "likewise daungerous extremitie" as if "scripture did not onely containe all things in that kind necessary, but al thinges simply".<sup>63</sup>

The distinction that Hooker makes between "all things ..necessary and al thinges simply" brings us to the core of the problem. Hooker emphasised over and over again that Scripture was given for a particular purpose and end. The

"absolute perfection" of Scripture must be seen in relation to "that end whereto it tendeth".<sup>64</sup> Although Hooker, as we have seen, magnified the "testimonies of God" as "true", "perfect" and "sufficient", they were only "true", "perfect" and "sufficient" unto "that end for which they were geven". Hooker readily admits that Rome "daungerously..[adds] to the word of God uncertaine tradition".<sup>65</sup> In so doing Rome admits "the maine drift of the body of sacred scripture not to be so large as it is".<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, although this may be true of the Church of Rome, it does not warrant the Puritans to enlarge the "scope and purpose of God" and to take it "more largely than behoveth".<sup>67</sup> If this is done, Hooker argues, the "racking" and "stretching" of Scripture can lead to "sundry as great inconveniences" as anything contemplated by the Papal Church, and he recoils from such a scenario. He is insistent that Scripture "is perfect and wanteth nothing requisite unto that purpose for which God delivered the same".<sup>68</sup> But just because Scripture is perfect and provides the individual, in his search for truth, with "the strongest proof all", this does not mean that "all thinges lawful to be done are comprehended in the scripture".<sup>69</sup> "Admit this", Hooker concludes in a classic statement of his position

"and marke, I beseech you, what would follow. God in delivering scripture to his Church should cleane have abrogated amongst them the law of nature; which is an infallible knowledge imprinted in the mindes of all the children of men, whereby both generall principles for directing of humaine actions are comprehended, and conclusions derived from them, upon which conclusions groweth in particularitie the choise of good and evill in the daylie affaires of this life."<sup>70</sup>

It is absurd to think, Hooker had in effect argued earlier in the *Lawes*, that we could only glorify God by a self-conscious act of obedience to Scripture. True, St Paul had exhorted christians to do all things to the glory of God but surely this

did not mean "that we sinne as oft as ever we goe about any thing, without an expresse intent and purpose to obey God therein".<sup>71</sup> This would have the effect of obliterating the "law of nature" to such an extent that we could not "move", "sleepe", "take the cuppe at the hand of our friend" or indeed perform "a number of thinges we oftentimes doe, only to satisfy some naturall desire without expresse, and actual reference unto any commaundement of God".<sup>72</sup>

Hooker's concern, however, is not limited to just exposing the impossibility of holding to this particular view of Scripture; his concern goes much deeper, for at root it is both pastoral and theological. Pastorally, for example, he imagines what the effect this doctrine of Scripture would have on "weake consciences". Simple, believing people would be in a constant state of spiritual torment because Scripture would begin to tease, perplex, ensnare and fill them with "infinite... scrupulosities, doubts insouluble, and extreme despaires".<sup>73</sup> But, Hooker is quick to add, it is not Scripture itself that would have this effect, for the effect of Scripture is "to the cleane contrarie". The fruit of Scripture is "resolute assurance and certaintie in that it teacheth." Nevertheless, the disastrous effect would be produced by the everyday necessities of this life, urging individuals to perform tasks which "the light of nature, common discretion, and judgement" directs them unto, coming into direct conflict with an intransigent doctrine of Scripture that teaches them that to do any such thing without the "sacred scripture of God for direction", would cause them "to sinne against their owne soules, and that they put forth their hands to iniquitie". "In weake and tender mindes", Hooker continues,

"wee little knowe what myserye this strict opinion woulde breede, besides the stoppes it woulde make in the whole course of mens lives and actions...Admit this position, and parents shall cause their children to sinne,

as oft as they cause them to do anything, before they come to yeares of capacitie and be ripe for knowledge in the scripture".<sup>74</sup>

Hooker points out that, on this basis, all instinctual actions are sinful and the only persons exempt from sin are those who obey Scripture; which not only condemns all actions as sinful in and of themselves but also presupposes that it is only mature Christians who would have the privilege of performing actions in direct obedience to Scripture, as they would be the only ones with enough knowledge of Scripture to use it in this way.

Hooker opposed the Puritans' hermeneutical approach to Scripture, then, for essentially pastoral reasons. But there is also a further theological objection that he entertains. In utilising Scripture to obliterate the "light of nature" which should direct us in the "daylie affairs of this life" the Disciplinarians have run rough-shod over the principal intent of Scripture and are thus demanding from the biblical text information it was not designed to deliver. In Hooker's view Scripture's main purpose was soteriological and was given in order to provide a fallen humanity with the saving knowledge so necessary and yet, at the same time, so completely out of reach. We are back, once more, to the Puritan's "misdistinguishing" between the way of grace and the way of nature. It was vital that a proper understanding of the relations between grace and nature was arrived at, and Hooker explains himself in a number of ways. He writes, "Scripture indeed teacheth thinges above nature, things which our reason by itself coulde not reach unto".<sup>75</sup> Here Hooker clearly places Scripture above nature but elsewhere Hooker makes the same point but places nature below grace; "nature is no sufficient teacher what we should doe that we may attaine



unto life everlasting".<sup>76</sup> Hooker is making the same point in two different ways. If Scripture teaches us things that are above nature it follows that nature cannot teach us the things of Scripture for, by the very nature of the case, supernatural truths are not those which are open to empirical demonstration. They are, after all, "above nature".<sup>77</sup>

Hooker has now come full circle and we are brought back to his concern with truths proportionable to the source from which they are derived. In Hooker's view it was inappropriate to divorce "the absolute perfection of Scripture" from the relation "unto that end whereto it tendeth".<sup>78</sup> Scripture must be read with a proper understanding for the reason it was delivered. In speaking of Scripture's sufficiency it must not be thought that the sufficiency of Scripture was of an absolute and exhaustive kind covering the whole range of human activity. Its sufficiency and absolute quality had a direct link with its purpose and this must constantly be remembered by the interpreter of Scripture. Hooker argues,

"We count those things perfect which want nothing requisite for the end whereto they were instituted. As therefore God created everie parte and particle of man exactly perfect, that is to say, in all pointes sufficient unto that use for which he appointed it, so the scripture, yea, every sentence thereof is perfect and wanteth nothing requisite unto that purpose for which God delivered the same".<sup>79</sup>

In so restricting the authority of Scripture to its soteriological purpose, Hooker is aware that he might be seen as dishonouring Scripture. It might seem that it is those who turn to Scripture for instruction as to what they should do in the details of life are the ones who truly honour and revere Scripture. But, Hooker concludes, what is at stake is the authority of Scripture which is being

undermined by the Puritans' approach which gives too much authority to Scripture in those areas where its authority is inappropriate.

"Whatsoever is spoken of God or thinges appertaining to God otherwise then as the truth is; though it seeme an honour, it is an injurie. And as incredible praises geven unto men do often abate and impaire the credit of their deserved commendation; so we must likewise take great heede, lest in attributing unto scripture more than it can have, the incredibilitie of that do cause even those thinges which indeed it hath most abundantly to be lesse reverently esteemed."<sup>80</sup>

Not only did Hooker realise that Puritan hermeneutics undermined the authority of Scripture by investing it with a sovereignty in those spheres of life that should most properly be directed by "the light of nature, common discretion, and judgement"; he also saw that it failed to take into account the Christocentric unity of Scripture. As we noted earlier Hooker argued that the world was directed by a number of "lawes" appropriate to the being of nature, men, angels and God. Accordingly, different hierarchies of law were operative dependent upon the nature of the thing or person being considered, and as the nature of Scripture was to provide us with supernatural knowledge so that we might be saved everlastingly, it is entirely appropriate, and indeed necessary, that Scripture should have Christ as its centre and as its interpretative key. "The mayne drifte of the whole newe Testament", Hooker reminds his readers,

"is that which Saint John setteth downe as the purpose of his owne historie, These things are written, that yee might believe that Jesus is Christ the Sonne of God, and that in believing yee might have life through his name. The drift of the old that which the Apostle mentioneth to Timothie, The holie Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation. So that the generall end of both olde and newe is one, the difference betweene them consisting in this, that the old did make wise by teaching salvation through Christ that should come, and that Jesus whome the Jewes did crucifie, and whome God did rayse agayne from the dead is he."<sup>81</sup>

Hooker's approach to Scripture is therefore filtered through a Christological lens that is not imposed upon the Scripture but is rather provided by Scripture itself. The purpose and end of Scripture is to save and it is for that reason that Hooker terms it "the word of life".<sup>82</sup>

This Christocentric approach to Scripture enables Hooker to interpret the Scriptures in a radically different way from his Puritan objectors. He is, first of all, able to see the whole sweep of Scripture and to understand its proper scope and emphasis. On this basis, Hooker can guard himself, for example, from a reading of Scripture that would place an equal emphasis on the Levitical penal code and on the Sermon on the Mount. In a sense the whole debate between Hooker and the Puritans can be reduced to a question of hermeneutics and Hooker's frustration with Puritan exegesis becomes evident when he tackles the Disciplinarians when they began to "pleade against the politie of the Church of England". In pleading against this polity the Puritans commonly alleged "the law of God, The worde of the Lorde" but when pressed which "law" and which "worde", Hooker points out, "their common ordinarie practise is, to quote by-speeches in some historicall narration or other, and to urge them as if they were written in moste exact form of lawe".<sup>83</sup> In Hooker's estimation, to use some "by-speeche" in an obscure "historicall narration" deeply embedded somewhere in the Old Testament as if this was legally binding on all Churches, was simply absurd. When this is done, "bare and unbuilted conclusions" are placed into the minds of men who either then doubt their faith because they cannot believe that the Scriptures teach what they are said to teach or they doubt Scripture altogether.

In this way, Hooker warns, "we add to the lawes of God" and "the sentence of God is heavy against them that wittingly shall presume thus to use the scripture".<sup>84</sup> On the contrary, obscure parts of the Old Testament are to be subordinated under the overarching Christological essence of Scripture and the Christological core is not to be abandoned in favour some obscure part of the Old Testament that might seem to favour Genevan Church polity. It can now be seen why Hooker was so horrified at Puritan attempts to impose Old Testament civil legislation upon society. If this course was pursued, it could only successfully be accomplished if the central message of Scripture viewed in its entirety was wholly eradicated.

If Hooker's Christological approach to Scripture acted as a brake to the temptation to treat the whole of Scripture in the same monochromatic and legal way, it needs to be ascertained what precise exegetical tools he employed. In a very illuminating and instructive passage Hooker reveals his exegetical skill that reflects both a literal approach to Scripture whilst keeping in line with the thinking of the ages. Hooker is unabashed to claim that he holds to and approves what he terms a "literal construction". In his debate with the Puritans it became apparent that Cartwright did not believe that in John 3:5 ("unless a man is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of heaven") the word "water" was to be taken literally but only as a metaphor for the Holy Spirit, so that the whole meaning of the text would remain the same if the word "water" was removed. Cartwright was offended by those who interpret "water" as

"materiall and elemental water" and argued that "water and the Spirit meaneth nothing els but the Spirit of God". Hooker objects to this and he writes,

"I hold it for a most infallible rule in expositions of sacred scripture, that where a litterall construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonlie the worst. There is nothing more daungerous than this licentious and deludinge arte, which chaungeth the meaning of words as alchymie doth or would doe the substance of metals, maketh of any thinge what it listeth and bringeth in the end all truth to nothing".<sup>85</sup>

Hooker perceived that the danger of Puritan exegesis was that it sought to spiritualise the text and to arrive at a deeper and hidden meaning that could only be done by not taking the words of Scripture in their intended, plain and natural sense. In this way Scripture was like a nose of wax that could be turned this way or that. For Hooker, on the other hand, "water" in John 3:5 meant precisely what it said and that those who tried, "with the name of the Spirit", "[to dry up water] in the wordes of Christ", "when the letter of the law hath two things plainly and expressly specified Water and the Spirit", could only do so on the basis of a false "criticall conceipt".<sup>86</sup>

The "criticall conceipt" of the Puritans is also further exposed by Hooker's appeal to antiquity. Here we are provided with a prime example of Hooker's insistence that interpreters of Scripture must not only take Scripture at face value; they must also bear in mind the "generall consent of antiquitie". Hooker pours scorn on Cartwright when he admits that in the past "certaine" exegetes have alleged that water might be taken to mean "materiall water". It is not that some men have interpreted John 3:5 in this way, Hooker argues; rather, it is "that of all the ancient there is not one to be named that ever did otherwise either expound or alleadge the place then as implying externall baptisme" with

physical water. Hooker now puts the question "Shall that which hath allwaies received this and no other construction be now disguised with a toy of noveltie?" Such a thought runs counter to the whole tenor of Hooker's theology and he accordingly dismisses it. Nevertheless he admits that with some such novel exegesis interpreters of Scripture may "be thought witte" and clever but, he warns, "with ill advise".<sup>87</sup> Just as Hooker was suspicious of those who tried to by-pass fifteen hundred years of the Church's common practice with regard to Episcopal ordering, so he is suspicious of those who try to read Scripture in novel and unique ways, thus demonstrating an "open contempt" of well worn interpretative paths.<sup>88</sup>

The fact that the Puritans could so misread Scripture, Hooker was convinced, was because they were enamoured with novelty. As we have noted in a previous chapter, he thought that the Puritans, when alone with their Bibles, were prone to think that whatever "strange phantasticall opinion soever at any time entered into their heads", their usual explanation was that this was taught them by the Holy Spirit.<sup>89</sup> The Puritans, of course, thought in this way because they believed that in divinely inspired Scripture God spoke to them directly and so what God said to them in the existential moment of reading was none other than God's voice. Moreover, such was their conviction that they began to disparage other Christians who obviously were not in possession of the Holy Spirit to the same degree and that sufficed as the explanation as to why they were unable to come to the same exegetical conclusions. Naturally, the Conformist party were equally sure that "the scriptures of God are sacred, and

that they have proceeded from God".<sup>90</sup> The debate, then, was not primarily about the authority of Scripture. All the parties concerned were heartily agreed on that score. But Hooker saw that the Puritans were gripped "by an earnest desire to draw all things under the determination of bare and naked scripture".<sup>91</sup> Their love of the supernatural working of the Holy Spirit, in his inspiration of Scripture and in the communication of divine truth to the human heart for example, meant the Puritan underestimated and took much "pains...in abating the estimation and credit of man." Obviously this greatly affected their hermeneutics and exegesis of Scripture. To consult, read, ponder and reflect on what other "ancients" had said with regard to John 3:5 for example smacked too much of human involvement, for it seemed to place the mere opinions of men between the Spirit filled interpreter of the Divinely- inspired text, when what the Puritan was always searching for was "infallible certainty". And surely this could only be obtained by a direct confrontation between the reader of Scripture and the God of Scripture with no need of other human intermediaries?

Hooker's answer to this question is to draw the whole argument back to its foundation. Both Conformist and Puritan were convinced that they met the saving revelation of God in the words of Scripture. But who drew the individual worshipper to Scripture in the first place? Who first encouraged and motivated him to pick up the Scripture and to begin reading it? Hooker points to the Church. "By experience we all know", he opines,

"that the first outward motive leading men so to esteeme of the scripture is the authority of God's Church. For when we know the whole Church of God hath that opinion of the scripture, we judge it even at the first an impudent thinge for any man bredde and brought up in the church to bee of a contrarye mind without cause".<sup>92</sup>

The Church's role in this matter is crucial. What the Church teaches in its role as "witness" and "keeper of holy Writ" cannot be side stepped.<sup>93</sup> The teaching weight of the Church is indeed significant and it needs to be taken into account, for the Holy Spirit does not only inspire Scripture; he also keeps, preserves and teaches his Church by constantly drawing his people to a deeper and deeper study of his word. Thus, in Hooker's view, it is not only irrational to expect the Holy Spirit to teach individuals all that life demands even to the extent of picking up a piece of straw, it is also irrational to expect the Holy Spirit to teach individuals from scratch everything they need to know, not only with regard to their spiritual duties but also the principal points of the christian faith. The normal activity of the Holy Spirit is to permit the regular sources of information to operate in teaching individuals what they need to know concerning their duties in this life before he uses the instrumentality of the Church's ministry in leading the individual to a correct understanding of spiritual matters. In short the Church leads and points individuals to Scripture and then guides and directs them in their reading of it.

Having outlined his position in this way it may appear that Hooker is in danger of implying that the authority of Scripture is in fact dependent upon the authority of the Church. If the first "outward motive" that leads men to esteem Scripture is the Church, it could certainly be asked if Scripture's authority is, in fact, subservient to the Church which provides this first "outward motive". But is this the case? To this question Hooker gives a qualified "no". It is true, Hooker argues, that the individual Christian would not necessarily know that the



Scriptures are the word of God unless the Church first made this claim for them. On this basis it might be argued that Scripture's authority is dependent on the Church but, Hooker quickly points out, once the individual has begun to read the Scriptures on the simple authority of the Church then the Scriptures, because they are inspired, "doth answer our received opinion concerning it". It is absolutely essential that the Scriptures should function in this way for if the first "outward motive" is the Church, this would ultimately count for nothing if the Spirit was not at working confirming and applying what had already been accepted on the basis of ecclesiastical authority. In other words to the "outward motive" must be applied the "inner motive" provided by the operation of the Holy Spirit. To be sure Hooker never uses the term "inner motive", but to all intents and purposes he is underlining the common Reformation concept of the internal witness of the Holy Spirit when he writes that after "we bestowe or labour in reading or hearing the misteries" of Scripture,

"the more we find that the thing doth answer our received opinion concerning it. So that the former inducement prevailing somewhat with us before, doth now much more prevaile, when the very thing hath ministered farther reason".<sup>94</sup>

Thus whilst the Church leads men to Scripture and points to Scripture as the word of God, the final authority of Scripture is *sui generis*, ministering "farther reason" through the operation of the Holy Spirit. Hooker was convinced that because Holy Scripture is the inspired Word of God to man it does not ultimately need the pronouncements of the Church for its authentication. Here, as elsewhere, Hooker was concerned to refute Papal claims that accused the Church of England of refusing the testimony of the Church. Hooker would have approved of his contemporary William Whitaker, Regius Professor of Divinity at

Cambridge and Master of St John's College, when he wrote, in his *Disputation on Holy Scripture*,

"We do not deny that it appertains to the Church to approve, acknowledge, receive, promulge, commend the Scriptures to all its members; and we say that this testimony is true and should be received by all. We do not therefore, as the papists falsely say of us, refuse the testimony of the Church, but embrace it. But we deny that we believe the Scriptures solely on account of this commendation of them by the Church. For we say that there is a more certain and illustrious testimony, whereby we are persuaded of the sacred character of these books that is to say, the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit, without which the commendation of the Church would have with us no weight or moment. The papists, therefore, are unjust to us when they affirm that we reject or make no account of the authority of the Church. For we gladly receive the testimony of the Church, and admit its authority; but we affirm that there is a far different more certain, true, and august testimony than that of the Church. The sum of our opinion is, that the Scripture is *autopistos*, that is, hath all its authority, and credit from itself."<sup>95</sup>

In Whitaker, as in Hooker, there is a concern to hold together both the authority of the Church and the authority of Scripture. Both operate in their own legitimate spheres and both would agree that Scripture, in the final analysis, because it is Divinely inspired, provides the reader with "the strongest proof of all."

Hooker has now exposed the essential complementary nature of the operations of Scripture, the Church, Reason and the Holy Spirit. In Hooker's view the Spirit worked in a close relationship with all three and he strongly objected to those who tried to put a "jarre between nature and scripture" and "scripture and the church".<sup>96</sup> In Hooker's thought the Spirit inspired the Scriptures, he led and directed the whole Church in her exposition and understanding of them and he led individuals into the arms of the Church, who in turn pointed them to the Scriptures. In their reading of the Biblical text the

individual christian was then expected to take pains and reflect, not just on what the Holy Spirit seemed to be saying to him as an individual, but what the Spirit had led the whole Church to see and understand in a particular text. Obviously, if an individual interpreter of Scripture came to a particular understanding of a text only to discover that he was the only one in the whole history of the christian Church who understood the text in that way, then he was mostly likely to be in error. But for the purpose of sifting, examining and reflecting on the meaning of the Biblical text, Reason played a vital role; it was a God given instrument that was not to be despised. Certainly, in this whole process there was no cast-iron guarantee that every individual pointed to the Scriptures by the Church would automatically either believe or even acknowledge the Scriptures as the word of God; neither could it even be presumed that he would reach a sound conclusion at the end of his endeavours. Hooker is well aware that in the dialectical process of relationships established between Scripture, Reason and the Church there needs to be the "special grace of the holy ghost" for "the inlightning of our minds".<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless that was no excuse for saying that the supernatural operations of the Holy Spirit were to be restricted and limited to just the inspiration of Scripture and the enlightening of only "godly" individuals who happened to be those who all agreed that the Church needed further reformation in any case. In arguing this way the Puritans ignored the normal work of the Holy Spirit in the realms of Nature, the Church and Reason.

It remains now to be seen if Hooker's doctrine of Scripture is at all compatible with the mainstream Reformation or was at odds with it.

#### 4.4 *The Reformation and Scripture*

It is impossible to understand the theology of the Reformation without recognising that first and foremost it is a theology of the word of God. Scripture dominated the Reformation in both its internal as well as its external development. In England the religious experience of Thomas Bilney was one that sprang from reading Paul's Epistle to Timothy and closely resembled Luther's experience reading Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Both men were spiritually hungry, punctilious in their duties as priests in the Church of God and yet both entirely lacking in any spiritual sense of peace and assurance. Scripture in both cases was central to their religious experience and as such it was bound to constitute the marrow of the theology that they increasingly developed and embraced and from very early on in the course of the Reformation, the Scriptures were regarded as the highest source of authority that the Church possess.

It is of course one thing to dethrone the Pope and enthrone the Bible but it is an entirely different thing to begin the exercise of interpreting the Bible. As we have already noted, the Puritan-Conformist debate clustered around the concept of how God was deemed to have spoken in his Word; the Puritan tendency was firstly to demand explicit biblical direction for any action contemplated in the minutiae of life and secondly to demand the continuing validity of Old Testament law. Hooker vigorously opposed the Puritans on both

these points and to that end he was assisted by the doctrinal position that had already been drawn by Luther and Calvin.

#### 4.5 *Martin Luther and Scripture*

If the theology of the Reformation is first and foremost a theology of the Word of God then it is not surprising to find that Luther's theological thought depends upon and presupposes the authority of Scripture.<sup>98</sup> In grounding his theology in this way it was inevitable that Luther, sooner or later, would be forced to confront the Church of his day. Luther could not follow the Roman Catholic arguments that sought to place the Church above Scripture on the basis that because the Church established and formed the canon she also establishes and guarantees its authority. Luther's firm reply was that if that was the case then it must also follow that John the Baptist is above Christ because he preceded and pointed to him.<sup>99</sup> As Luther saw it the situation was opposite to that which was accepted by the Roman Church. Holy Scripture was the Queen to which all must submit and obey. Luther wrote,

"This queen must rule, and everyone must obey, and be subject to her. The Pope, Luther, Augustine, Paul, or even an angel from heaven-these should not be masters, judges, or arbiters but only witnesses, disciples, and confessors of Scripture."<sup>100</sup>

Luther struggled to reach this position as he contemplated the condition of the late medieval Church. He had become aware that the Church of his day had gradually ceased to be a true catholic Church but had instead been metamorphosed into something quite different. Not only had the Church lost key

elements of doctrine, most notably justification by faith, a right understanding of the Lord's Supper, the authority of Scripture and of the ministry, but it had also added many other traditions that had no warrant either in Scripture or Tradition, namely, indulgences, the sacrifice of the Mass, papal infallibility and the whole plethora of Roman medieval practises that had turned the Church of Christ into something approaching a cult. Thus, in Luther's view, the deformation of the Church had to be reformed according to its ancient and Apostolic practice.

But where was the pattern of the Church's original plan and charter? Once this question was asked the answer was obvious and Luther turned to the New Testament. Like the later Puritans, Luther was convinced that the Scriptures provided the necessary pattern and blueprint, the regulator by which the Church was to order her life. Of course no sooner had Luther turned to the New Testament when he realised that the New also pointed back to and included the Old. Jesus himself regarded the Old Testament as authoritative for it testified about him (John 5.39). Likewise, on the road to Emmaus, had not the risen Christ, when explaining to the downcast and depressed disciples the significance of the crucifixion, begun with Moses and all the prophets, explaining to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself? For the Reformation to succeed, therefore, it meant "setting the Church in a living relation not only to the New Testament, but to the whole bible" and the whole bible witnessed to and set forth none other than Christ, the founder of the Church.<sup>101</sup> On this basis the Scriptures became alive for Luther because they pointed him to his Saviour. Luther claimed that each reference to Scripture shed

light on a previous one eventually establishing a whole, coherent and organic argument. As a consequence the Bible was read, integrated and united. In his book *Avoiding the Doctrines of Men* Luther wrote, commenting on Deuteronomy 4.2 ("You shall not add anything to the word which I speak to you, nor take anything from it"),

"Now some will say that Moses here speaks only of his own word, for many books of the prophets as well as the entire New Testament have been added beyond the books of Moses. I reply: Nevertheless nothing new has been added, for the same thing that is found in the books of Moses is found also in the others. These other books, while using different words and narratives, do nothing more than illustrate how the word of Moses has been kept or not kept. Throughout them all there is one and the same teaching and thought. And here we can challenge them to show us one word in all the books outside those of Moses that is not already found in the books of Moses. For this much is beyond question, that all the scriptures point to Christ alone... Therefore everything in the other books is already in the books of Moses, as in a basic source."<sup>102</sup>

"All the Scriptures point to Christ alone". Over and over Luther would insist upon Christ as the theological nerve centre of both Old and New Testaments. This is what united the Bible. But if there was unity between the two there was also diversity and this unity and diversity resided in the Lutheran distinction between Law and Gospel. Without a doubt the gospel could be found in the Old Testament; albeit in figures and types. Hence, in speaking of the Levitical law and the priesthood of Moses Luther encourages his readers to constantly keep Christ before them so that they might arrive at a sound interpretation. "If you would interpret well and confidently, set Christ before you, for he is the man to whom it all applies every bit of it. Make the High Priest Aaron, then to be nobody but Christ alone."<sup>103</sup> Luther felt that by focusing the Old Testament on Christ he was illuminating the deeper, "spiritual meaning" of

the text whilst at the same time keeping faith, not only with the literal words of Scripture but also with the redemptive-historical situation in which they were written. As a result all the Old Testament texts Luther was able to interpret in relation to Christ whom they prefigured and at the same time be kept grounded and rooted in a deeply historical context. Naturally it followed that if the Gospel could be found in the Old Testament it was also true that the Law could be discovered in the New; witness Christ's references to the Law in the Sermon on the Mount.

In Luther's exegetical theology there is an essential unity between the Old and New Testaments. Nevertheless, despite this overlap between Law and Gospel Luther could still say that a distinction remained. For,

"..just as the chief teaching of the New Testament is really the proclamation of grace and peace through the forgiveness of sins in Christ, so the chief teaching of the Old Testament is really the teaching of laws, the showing up of sin, and the demanding of good. You should expect this in the Old Testament."<sup>104</sup>

But, it has to be asked, what was the function of this distinction? Having highlighted the difference between the Old and New Testaments, Luther unites them once more. The function of the Old Testament as Law was to drive the individual to Christ. In his *Prefaces to the Old Testament* Luther wrote that the law had to wear people down and kill them so that they begin to long for grace, mercy and the gospel that is then presented to them in a full and clear way in the New Testament.<sup>105</sup> Moses preached the law and in so doing ministered sin and death. This, according to Luther, was necessary due to man's pride which otherwise would not admit his sin and misery.



It can be seen that the Old Testament for Luther was pivotal in his understanding of Scripture as the Word of God. On the basis of the "spiritual meaning" that Luther was able to attach to the whole of the Old Testament it is clear that there was no part of Scripture that could be deemed superfluous and unnecessary.<sup>106</sup> In many ways this is precisely what Thomas Cartwright was saying when he appealed to the Old Testament urging its constant applicability to the New Testament Church. But there is a great difference between the way in which Luther was able to read the Old Testament and the way in which the Puritans were led to uphold the continuing validity of the sacred text. Luther was categorical, for example, in his repudiation of the Mosaic judicial law.<sup>107</sup> It was obvious to him that the Mosaic legislation as legislation was only binding so long as the people of God were confined in Palestine. But now, for fifteen hundred years, the law had been abolished; it was, as it were "lying in ashes in Jerusalem."<sup>108</sup> There were, of course, those radical reformers such as Thomas Muntzer and Carlstadt who, like the radical Puritans with whom Hooker had to contend, constantly appealed to the rigours of Old Testament law. In a sermon in Allstedt in the July of 1524 for example, Muntzer demanded that the Princes wipe out all the godless, including ungodly rulers, priests and monks. Such drastic action was warranted, Muntzer thought, on the textual basis provided by Deuteronomy 25.19 when the Israelites were ordered to beat the godless Amalek to death once they had entered the land of rest. Commenting on this Luther writes

"But our factious spirits go ahead and say of everything they find in Moses, 'Here God is speaking, no one can deny it; therefore we must keep it.' So then the rabble go to it. Whew! If God has said it, who then will say

anything against it? Then they are really pressed like pigs at a trough...Misery and tribulation come out of this sort of thing."<sup>109</sup>

The problem, however, was whether God really was saying these things to Muntzer. Just as Hooker accused the Puritans of reading Scripture legally rather than historically and refusing to search for its meaning within the framework of redemptive history and Christological prefiguring, so Luther adopts the same theological position and responds in a similar way to the radicals of his day. He writes,

"One must deal cleanly with the Scriptures. From the very beginning the word has come to us in various ways. It is not enough simply to look and see whether this is God's word, whether God has said it; rather we must look and see to whom it has been spoken, whether it fits us. That makes all the difference between night and day. God said to David, "Out of you shall come the king", etc. [II Sam. 7.13]. But this does not pertain to me, nor has it been spoken to me. He can indeed speak to me if he chooses to do so. You must keep your eye on the word that applies to you, that is spoken to you."<sup>110</sup>

In this way Luther is able to distinguish between two different kinds of "word" in Scripture. The first "word" is that which does not "pertain or apply to me" and the second "word" is the word which does. According to Luther it was the tendency of the false prophets who, appealing to the Old Testament, "pitch in and say, 'Dear people this is the word of God.'" Luther's difficulty is that he cannot deny that it is the word of God. But, he adds, although it may be God's word we are not the people to whom it is addressed. That "word" was addressed by Moses in a given historical situation and it was not applicable in the present. "Therefore", Luther argues, "tell this to Moses: Leave Moses and his people together; they have had their day and do not pertain to me. I listen to that word which applies to me. We have the gospel."<sup>111</sup> Hence Luther is quick to oppose

the iconoclasts who were motivated not only by the assumption that the Church of Rome was not a Church at all, more akin to the pagan peoples that inhabited the land of Canaan before the Israelite conquest, but also by the fact that they viewed themselves as the true Israel that had to demolish the pagan temples that were still in the land. Luther felt that the radicals had so "misdistinguished" in their reading of Scripture that they were unable to see the two types of "word" which the Scriptures contained. This distinction however was so crucial and fundamental that it had to be borne in mind "by all Christians, for everything depends entirely upon it."<sup>112</sup> Indeed, Luther went further; not only did he argue that "everything depended upon it" but also that the gospel was in danger of being obliterated if this distinction was not observed. To read the Old Testament in the way proposed by the English Disciplinarians and the Continental radicals would be to "deny the gospel, banish Christ, and annul the whole New Testament."<sup>113</sup> Consequently it is not that Moses and the judicial law must be enforced; rather it is that the Christian, liberated by the gospel, who must "beat Moses to death and throw many stones at him".<sup>114</sup>

Luther's careful distinction between the two senses of God's "word" in Scripture comes very close to Hooker. On the one hand Luther can accept the whole of the Old Testament as absolutely essential; after all it prefigured and pointed to Christ and as such had a deep "spiritual" meaning applicable at all times to all Christians. Likewise Hooker, looking at the whole of the Old Testament could see that it set forth salvation "through Christ that should come".<sup>115</sup> As a result Hooker, like Luther, can read the Old Testament for its

"spiritual" value and is similarly appalled by the thought that the Old Testament should be read in order to extract legislation that would then become binding on either the Church or society. On the other hand, it was just because both Luther and Hooker looked to the real, Christological sense of the Old Testament, that they were then free not only to study the Old Testament seriously and devotionally and to regard all of it as inspired but they were also able to set the Old Testament in its proper redemptive-historical context and to see that much Old Testament law was not immediately relevant, in a literal sense, to sixteenth century Europe. On these grounds both Luther and Hooker were agreed. And on these same grounds Luther opposed the radicals and Hooker opposed the Puritans. It remains to be seen whether Calvin did the same.

#### 4.6 *John Calvin and Scripture*

Paul Avis asserts that "in Calvin we find the same sure-footed discrimination between Law and Gospel as in Luther" and it is without a doubt true that the relationship between the Old and New Testaments is a matter of great concern to Calvin.<sup>116</sup> Book Two of Calvin's *Institutio* for example is headed "Of the Knowledge of God the Redeemer, in Christ, as first manifested to the Fathers, under the Law, and thereafter to us under the Gospel."<sup>117</sup> The very title that Calvin gives to the whole of his second book betrays his belief that the content of both Old and New Testaments is the same; it is Christ who is revealed to the Fathers under the law and it is Christ who is similarly revealed "to us under the gospel". Christ therefore, at one and the same time, both binds

together and dominates the whole of the biblical canon. And it was absolutely essential that he should do so. For Calvin was insistent that in both Old and New Testaments man is portrayed as a sinner, lost without God and without hope in the world. This being the case it is as true for the Old Testament man as it is for the New Testament that "after the fall of the first man, no knowledge of God without the Mediator was effectual to salvation."<sup>118</sup> Because, in Calvin's theology, sin could only be atoned for on the basis of the mediatorial work of Christ it was necessary to show how this is true for all ages. Calvin goes on to argue that "Christ speaks not of his own age merely, but embraces all ages, when he says, "This is life eternal, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."<sup>119</sup> In Calvin's thought Christ as mediator is central to all true worship and for that reason alone he must have been present in the Abrahamic covenant; a covenant entered into by faith given that it was in existence for some four hundred years before the introduction of the law. Furthermore, Calvin adds to the weight of his argument by once more reminding his readers that Christ was integral to the whole of the Old Testament on the simple basis that it was because the Jews were so steeped in laws and prophecies that in order to seek their freedom, they were constrained to search for Christ who was present as a type, figure or sketch in the dual priestly and royal lines.<sup>120</sup> As a sacrificing priest and king, as a descendant of both Levi and David, Calvin writes, "Christ was exhibited to the eyes of the Israelites as in a double mirror."<sup>121</sup>

The relationship between both Old and New Testaments is extremely close. Calvin claims (in chapter ten of book two headed "the resemblance between the Old and New Testaments") that "the Covenant made with all the fathers in so far from differing from ours in reality and substance,...is altogether one and the same."<sup>122</sup> Calvin points out that the similarity between the two Covenants exists firstly, in that the Jews were not only promised earthly blessings but also the hope of immortality and, secondly, that they entered into covenant "founded on no merits of their own, but solely on the mercy of God, who called them; and thirdly, that they "both had and knew Christ the mediator."<sup>123</sup>

But if there is such a close relationship between the two Testaments Calvin is equally insistent that there are, as yet, fundamental and crucial differences. For whilst the covenant "in reality and substance.. is altogether one and the same", "the administration" of that covenant is, nevertheless, "different" and Calvin deals with this difference in the following chapter, chapter eleven.

Calvin opens this section of the *Institutio* by admitting that although there are differences ("four, or if you chose to add a fifth I have no objections") these do not "derogate ...respect from their established unity."<sup>124</sup> The "established unity" is such an important concept to Calvin that even the differences that he detects reduce themselves, in the final analysis, to the difference between a promise and the reality of the fulfilment of that promise. Thus, in the first difference, the Lord, in order to "direct the thoughts of his people, and raise their minds to the heavenly inheritance" was pleased to hold

forth the promise of that heavenly blessing under the foreshadowing that was provided by earthly material blessings. Consequently, Calvin writes, when God,

"chose Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their posterity, to the hope of immortality, he promised them the land of Canaan for an inheritance, not that it might be the limit of their hopes, but that the view of it might train and confirm them in the hope of that true inheritance, which, as yet, appeared not."<sup>125</sup>

This theme of the promise and the reality is then extended by Calvin throughout the other four differences that he lists. The second distinction for example is that the Old Testament contains "types" that exhibit only the "image" or "shadow" whilst the "reality" and "substance" was "absent" until it was manifested in the New Testament in "full truth" and "entire body."<sup>126</sup> Similarly, in the third difference that is outlined, Calvin returns to this theme employing Jeremiah 3:31-34 as the basis for his argument. Calvin points out that the Apostle Paul, in 2 Corinthians 3:5-6, had used Jeremiah to draw comparisons between "Law and Gospel", "letter and spirit", "tables of stone and tables of the heart", "preaching of death and of life", "condemnation and justification", the one "void and the other permanent."<sup>127</sup> Immediately following upon this distinction Calvin adds a fourth that arises naturally out of the preceding one. The Old Testament "begets fear". It is full of weak consciences and trembling hearts but the New Testament comes with joyful news that frees the conscience. However, whilst not wishing to diminish this position, Calvin is quick to point out that Old Testament believers could also "have been partakers of the same liberty and joy" as New Testament ones but this joy and freedom could not have been derived from the Law. On the contrary, the Law could only oppress them like slaves and vex them with an unquiet conscience. But this was often enough so that they

"fled for refuge to the Gospel" which, as we have already seen, was present as an "image" or "shadow". The fifth and final difference that Calvin deduces is a simple and obvious one. Under the Old Testament dispensation the covenant of grace was limited to one nation. However, now that the Mediator Christ had come "the Gentiles were not only made equal to the Jews, but seemed to be substituted into their place."<sup>128</sup>

On these grounds Calvin can read the Old Testament in a way that is virtually identical to the position taken by both Luther and Hooker. On the one hand it can be viewed in a historical light. It was given to the people of Israel in a particular time and a particular place and as such the law is bound to that time and place. Calvin writes that "the Lord did not deliver [the law] by the hand of Moses to be promulgated in all countries...." Rather, because God had taken the Jewish nation under his care in a given historical moment, "he had a special regard to it in enacting laws."<sup>129</sup> On the other hand it is beneficial to all Christians in that its unique and real value lies in its Christological orientation. It was given, says Calvin, not to lead the chosen people away from Christ but "to keep them in suspense until his advent: to inflame their desire, and confirm their expectation, that they might not become dispirited by the long delay."<sup>130</sup> Here we have, in as clear a way as could be wished, the right "distinguishing" that Hooker and Luther both lament is so singularly lacking in their theological opponents. And Calvin, on precisely the same grounds as Luther and Hooker, takes issue with those who attempted to implement what Archbishop Whitgift was later to call the "judicials of Moses".<sup>131</sup> In his commentary on 2 Corinthians, Calvin wrote "Christ made an



end of the ministration of Moses is so far as its own peculiar properties distinguished it from the gospel....I, for my part, take the abolition of the Law...to apply to the whole of the old testament in so far as it is opposed to the Gospel."<sup>132</sup> Calvin argues that those who are so enamoured of the Old Testament that they can only read it in its "literal" and not "spiritual" sense are "stupid", "perilous", "seditious", "false", and "most absurd".<sup>133</sup>

#### 4.7 *Conclusion*

The picture that has emerged from our investigation into the general approach taken to Scripture by both Hooker and the magisterial Reformers has revealed that they read the Scriptures in the same redemptive-historical light. For the mainstream Reformers Scripture had overarching Christological concerns. This had a profound effect on the way Scripture was read and it is in their reading of Scripture that great similarities are found that, in the end, served to distance Hooker from the Puritans and Luther and Calvin from the radicals.

It must be remembered, however, that although great differences were later to emerge between the Puritans and the radicals on the one hand and the mainstream Reformers on the other nevertheless all the parties concerned were convinced that Scripture was the inspired Word of God. Cartwright was convinced that the Holy Spirit held the hands of those who wrote Scripture. Hooker claimed that the prophets spoke each syllable as the Spirit put the word into their mouths. Part of Luther's difficulty was that could not deny that when

the radicals quoted the Old Testament they were quoting the very words of God. Likewise Calvin was convinced write that the apostles were "sure and authentic amanuenses of the Holy Spirit" and that therefore "their writings are to be regarded as the oracles of God".<sup>134</sup> But beyond this there was little agreement.

First of all, as we have seen, the Puritans and the radicals were so convinced of Scripture's divine inspiration that they treated Scripture as direct commands from God. Read in this way Scripture became a legal document that provided the Church was explicit and concrete detail to order and control every area of her life. Thus Cartwright could argue that Scripture was so replete with information that it even went as far as providing instruction for the "taking up of a rush of strawe" and Muntzer, on the basis of Deuteronomy 25:19, could call for the slaughter of all the ungodly. For Hooker, Luther and Calvin to approach Scripture in this way could only lead to disaster. It obscured the central thrust of Scripture which, in Hooker's words, was to teach "salvation through Christ"; in the Old Testament "through Christ that should come" and in the New Testament "that Jesus whome the Jewes did crucifie, and whome God did rayse agayne from the dead is he".<sup>135</sup>

Secondly, it was the ability of the magisterial Reformers to see the central thrust of Scripture as foreshadowing and prefiguring Christ that enabled them to read Scripture in such a discriminating way that enabled them, at one and the same time, to hold to the absolute necessity of the Old Testament without then succumbing to a slavish following and obedience. Hooker pleaded

for the Old Testament to be read "historically". To be sure, the Old Testament is God's Word but God's Word for a time and a place that no longer applied to sixteenth century Europe. As Luther argued the Old Testament is most certainly God's Word but is it God's word to me in the same way as it was God's Word, for example to Samuel, David or Jonathan? It is God's Word to me in so far as it points me to Christ; in so far as it preaches the gospel but beyond this it is not God's Word in the same sense. As Calvin argued the Law has been abolished in so far as it opposed the Gospel. But this was not to say, as Cartwright had tried to say, that the Reformers were restricting and "shrinking" the arms of Scripture which were otherwise so "long and large". What the Reformers were attempting to do was to allow the Scriptures to speak clearly and with perspicuity in that very area of life where it was most essential that its voice was heard. By turning to Scripture for direction in all areas of life the Reformers were convinced that its real, necessary and "spiritual" message could only be clouded and obscured; with the effect that the gospel itself was in danger of being lost.

Thirdly, it must not be thought that just because the Reformers adopted a Christocentric approach to Scripture this in fact necessitated a less than whole-hearted commitment to the doctrine of Scripture's inspiration. It would be a mistake to think that it was this doctrine that divided the mainstream Reformers from their more radical counterparts. Although Hooker, Luther and Calvin could hold to the "spiritual" sense of Scripture they this did not necessitate a belief that the "spiritual" could be obtained at the expense of the concrete words of Scripture. As we saw Hooker opposed Cartwright on

precisely these grounds. Cartwright had also wished to read Scripture in a "spiritual" sense but in such a way, Hooker argues, that the meaning of words was changed as alchemy attempts to change metal from one sort into another, so bringing truth to nothing.<sup>136</sup> Certainly for Hooker, Luther and Calvin the Christocentric unity of the Bible provided them with the ability, at one and the same time, to hold fast to the actual text whilst at the same time arguing that not all of Scripture was equally applicable or pertinent. And it was this way of reading the text that drew the magisterial Reformers together and ultimately divided them from more radical positions.

#### 4.8 *Hooker, Hooker Scholarship and Scripture*

As we have seen with Hooker and his understanding of both Reason and Tradition there has developed a tendency in Hooker scholarship to regard Hooker as somehow less than committed to the Reformation's doctrinal first principles. On this basis it is asserted that Hooker's view of Reason is not that of the Reformation. A similar position is taken with his view of Tradition and the Church's continuity with the past. In this context it is at times argued that Hooker's "historical sense" is one of the outstanding characteristics of his theology; and it is without doubt that Anglicans have prided themselves on this aspect of their ecclesiology especially as it focuses on the continuity of the historic Anglican Episcopate; often to the detriment of closer unity with other Reformed Churches.<sup>137</sup> If this is true with respect to Hooker's treatment of Reason and Tradition it is not surprising to find that these same arguments are

used with regard to Hooker's understanding of biblical authority and attempts are made, in this context as in the others, to prise Hooker away from a explicitly Reformed commitment to Scripture in order to allow a distinct "Anglicanism" to develop. This, for example, is explicitly stated by W.P. Haugaard. According to Haugaard, Hooker provided the English Church with "examples of Scriptural interpretation" that later "blossomed into what eventually became known as "Anglicanism".<sup>138</sup> Here Hooker's theology, and a later developed "Anglicanism", are being introduced as an understanding of the Christian faith that is in some way doctrinally unique when contrasted with other sixteenth century Reformed theologians. But on what basis does Haugaard defend such a premise?

The first point that Haugaard makes, in order to create a synthesis unique to "Anglicanism", is to argue that because Hooker rejected "scriptural omniscience", he was furnished with a hermeneutical tool that was distinctive to his particular theology, and which later gave rise to a recognisably "Anglican" approach to Scripture. According to Haugaard, Hooker, in adopting this approach entered "hermeneutical fields that had been substantially untouched by either defenders of the Elizabethan settlement or continental theologians".<sup>139</sup> In rejecting Scripture's omniscience, of course, Hooker was arguing that there were other sources of knowledge, instruction and wisdom that the Christian could usefully employ without doing damage to a high view of Scripture. We are back, once again, to Hooker's hierarchy of laws so eloquently described in Book One. There Hooker had isolated natural, celestial, divine, human and rational law and he maintained that any one aspect of those laws may

be utilised by the Christian in seeking to do God's will. Obviously, as we have already seen, Hooker draws limits around the ability of any one set of these varying types of law to reveal the knowledge man needs in order to be saved. That knowledge, says Hooker, could only be provided by Scripture. The law of Reason, for example, could deduce many good things that would be quite legitimate for men to do without recourse to the Word of God. Scripture, then, is not needed, in the phrase with which we are now familiar, to instruct us to the extent of "taking up of a rush or strawe". But the question remains. Is this approach unique to Hooker? Did not Calvin and Luther also draw similar distinctions? And the answer is clear. Both Luther and Calvin permitted Reason great latitude to inform the Christian mind. For Luther, Reason could be used in the fields of art, science, medicine and law. Likewise, Calvin's doctrine of "common grace", meant that Reason could be used in many areas of earthly life without prejudicing biblical authority in the very area that it is needed; namely to instruct man in the way of eternal life. To be sure, this is not to say that Hooker, Luther and Calvin were identical, and that each gave equal weight and authority to each of the various sources of human knowledge. It is no doubt the case that each had their own varying emphases, and each exploited differing lines of inquiry, given their unique historical situations and the different arguments being employed by their various theological opponents. But for this argument to stick, it is not necessary that all three Reformers either should, or must be, alike. All that is being argued here is that Hooker, Luther and Calvin shared essentially the same theological universe and, given their similar theological outlook, it is reasonable to suppose that they would all have rejected Disciplinary "scriptural

omnicompetence" and furthermore, they would have rejected it on the same theological grounds. Thus, Hooker's rejection of the Puritans' view of biblical authority, did not give him or a later "Anglicanism" something unique and distinctive; something, in other words, that Hooker did not already share with the magisterial Reformers, and that the Church of England did not already share with other sixteenth century Reformed Churches.

Secondly Haugaard makes much of what he terms as "interlocking Grace and Nature, Sacred and Secular History".<sup>140</sup> Haugaard supports this point by utilising two main planks of argument. He insists that for Hooker "the sacred history told by revelation in Scriptures is continuous with the course of history in the larger human scene to which it belonged".<sup>141</sup> As an example of this Haugaard cites Hooker's juxtaposition of St Paul's New Testament writings and Tacitus' *Annals* "as common witness of the world's "execrable" estimation of the name 'Christian'". Thus, it is maintained, Hooker was able to perceive that the truths given in revelation were applicable to, interpenetrate, and correspond to actual events in the secular realm. Moreover, if in the secular world, in the "earthly kingdom", the kingdom "outside" Scripture, grace and nature interlock, then it is not surprising to find that this can also be discerned with the sacred text itself. In this context Haugaard bids us witness the way in which Hooker contrasts Festus and Paul. Festus, a natural man, devoid of spiritual grace, could not see Christ by faith; whereas Paul, by God's grace could preach Christ. Thus even within the "godly kingdom", the kingdom "inside" Scripture, indeed, in the very text itself,

we are given an example of nature's need of grace. The point being made is that grace and nature are welded together even in Scripture.

Haugaard's second plank is that provided by Hooker's "historical perspective". For Haugaard this historical perspective "pervades the *Lawes* so subtly and in such traditional trappings that readers have overlooked the extent to which it has influenced Hooker's thought."<sup>142</sup> Haugaard points out that Hooker, Cartwright and Whitgift could agree that some things in church life were variable according to time, place and circumstance. But, according to Haugaard, Hooker went much further than this. Hooker's "historical contextualization provided a perspective through which he could view the very communities of the Old and New Testaments themselves and interpret the sacred text in the light of their changing life".<sup>143</sup> As evidence of this Haugaard points to Hooker's portrayal of the development of Jewish worship. Under bondage in Egypt Jewish worship was invariably conducted under trying circumstances and in marked contrast to the later grandeur of worship conducted in the Jerusalem temple. Thus, Hooker writes, it follows that when God gave detailed judicial laws about the sort of worship to be offered he "had an eye unto the nature of that people, and to the countrey where they were to dwell." Commenting on this as a unique feature of Hooker's theology, Haugaard understands Hooker to be saying that God acts "in accordance with the principles of historical contextualization".<sup>144</sup> With this understanding Haugaard continues, Hooker could, without questioning, take "the literal account of God's direct dealings with ancient Israel" and, at the same time, "take full account of the human situation



which the text described." Haugaard concludes his essay, after a discussion of teleology within history, that Hooker was the man who "forged new exegetical tools that were to become the stock-in-trade of future biblical interpreters".

Naturally, this reading of Hooker raises pertinent questions. Haugaard seems to assume, at various points, that Hooker's approach was a unique and novel one. And yet, it is precisely in those areas that Haugaard detects Hooker's uniqueness, that Hooker stands most close to the exegetical tools that were forged, not just by Hooker alone, but by the Reformation as a whole. Hooker, then, should be read as standing in close connection to, and as part of, the Reformation. It is questionable, therefore, whether the hermeneutical fields that Hooker entered had been untouched by the continental theologians. Scriptural omniscience, to take just one example, was not a doctrine that was shared by the magisterial Reformers and the English Puritans. On the contrary, Hooker's success was partly dependent on the fact that he was able to exploit fully the mainstream Reformation's approach to Scripture (an approach that regarded Scripture as vital and necessary so that man may be saved everlastingly but did not demand that Scripture provide mankind with all knowledge necessary) and to demonstrate that he stood closer to the Reformers than did his Puritan opponents.

Furthermore, it needs to be borne in mind that Luther and Calvin are also replete with examples of the supposedly unique Hookerian ability to regard "the sacred history told by revelation" as "continuous with the course of history

in the larger human scene". In our chapter on Hooker and Tradition we especially noted, in Luther and Calvin's treatment of the Church's fall, the ability to see, in the unfolding development of the Church's life, the continuing validity and relevance of much of what as read in Scripture; so making revelation "continuous with the course of history". For Luther this meant that he could see that the continuing rising and fall of the Church, so loudly portrayed in Scripture, was happening in front of his very eyes. The "falling" of the Church under the Papacy was, in Luther's view, to be expected. The Church is often falling. It will, of course, rise again but this rising and falling constitutes, for Luther, the heart of the Church's struggle in the world. This rising and falling can be read not only in the "sacred history told by revelation" but also as "continuous with the course of history". And the same thing can be seen in Calvin as well. For Calvin was also able to make direct parallels and connections between the fall of man from the Garden and the fall of the Church from her pristine and apostolic purity. Here Calvin could clearly see that what was true in Scripture was also true in the "larger human scene".

But what of Haugaard's argument with regard to Hooker's "historical contextualization"? If anything it was surely the great discovery of the Reformation that the Scriptures should be read in their historical context. Luther and Calvin are almost continuously making the point that God's Word must be read with an eye to whom it was addressed. God's acts of redemption took place in history. They are, in other words, at one and the same time both redemptive and historical. And in biblical interpretation this had to be borne in mind. Luther

would always ask himself the question whether God's Word to Moses, Samuel or the David was, in fact, God's word for him. And very often Luther had to conclude that, in the direct and immediate sense, it was not for him. Similarly Calvin could see that God worked "in accordance with the principles of historical contextualization". What was given to Israel was given in a particular time and place; it did not mean that the "judicials of Moses" needed to be applied in the present. That was for them. The New Testament Church has Christ. Those words did not apply in the context of sixteenth century Europe.

In conclusion, two things can be said with regard to Haugaard's essay. It is not that in his reading of Hooker he has misconstrued Hooker's hermeneutical approach. The hermeneutical tools that Haugaard isolates are indeed the tools that Hooker employed. We are not contending on that score. What our thesis is challenging is whether those tools were, in fact, unique to Hooker and to a nascent "Anglicanism". It is hoped that proof has been given that Hooker was merely employing the hermeneutical tools of the Reformation against those who considered themselves to be the real descendants of Reformed thought but had departed from it in several major areas. By using the hermeneutical tools of the Reformation in the way that he does Hooker is implicitly arguing that he is the real inheritor of the Reformation's mantle; and that his opponents are arguing in a way that undermines the very work of those Reformer's they are purporting to support. It is this fact that Haugaard radically underestimates.

## Chapter Five

### Hooker on Reason, Tradition and Scripture: An Assessment

Hooker's mature theology with regard to the difficult questions pertaining to the sources of theological authority has now been set out and established. In doing so we have noted that Hooker's commanding position in the galaxy of Anglican thinkers is such that many have concluded that Hooker is, if not the "Father of Anglicanism", at least he is the theologian that first managed to articulate a recognisable Anglican "style" that was dependent upon a distinctive Anglican theology. This unique theology has been commonly understood to be characterised as a theology of the *via media* and it was held that Hooker was the theologian that best represented the *via media* case.

But if this is true it had to be defined, in precise theological terms, what was meant by a theology of the *via media* that Hooker supposedly represented. In answer to this question, and relying upon the work of Egil Grislis and W.J. Torrance Kirby, it was discovered that various schools of thought had emerged with respect to Hooker's theology all of which had as their unifying theme a common conviction that as the theologian of the Church of England and the *via media* Hooker was not fully committed to the doctrinal first principles of the Reformation. Indeed, the very term *via media* implied a theology that lay somewhere in between Rome and the Reformation and its novelty therefore consisted in its theological distance from either Catholicism or Protestantism. At first glance it appeared that the case for Hooker's less than whole hearted

commitment to the Reformation was on solid ground. After all, Hooker's *Lawes* were directed against those Puritans who were professed followers of Calvin and it was argued that in so attacking the Puritans Hooker was concentrating his guns on the heresy of Calvinism. As Hooker's contemporaries they certainly perceived Hooker to be undermining the Reformation's achievement and they accordingly accused him of using all his skill to achieve this end. By and large most Hooker scholarship has chosen to agree with Hooker's Puritan critics, thereby accepting the *Christian Letter* as giving an authentic assessment of Hooker's stance. Nevertheless this completely overlooked the fact, highlighted by W.J. Torrance Kirby, that Hooker's success in defending the Church of England's Reformed pedigree was based on his ability to demonstrate, not only that his own position was much closer to that hammered out by the Reformers, but also that it was the Puritans who had abandoned the high ground of Reformed orthodoxy. In other words that it was the Puritans who were trying to out-reform the Reformation and in so doing were creating a novel theological synthesis that bore little resemblance to orthodox christian thought.

In order to defend this position it had to be shown that Hooker's approach to fundamental questions of authority was similar to the approach adopted by the Reformation as a whole. This was done by examining Hooker's use of Reason, Tradition and Scripture and then contrasting it, either with the *Christian Letter*, or with Thomas Cartwright. Hooker's position was then further exposed when compared with the stance taken by Luther and Calvin. With reference to Hooker's use of Reason we noted, as Torrance Kirby pointed out,

that Hooker's use of Reason was wholly compatible with an explicitly Reformed view that sought to highlight the differing use of Reason depending on whether it was being employed in the *regnum mundi* or the *regnum Christi*. According to Hooker "supernatural lawes" could not be discovered in a "naturall way". Reason was powerless, in the spiritual realm, to discover "what we should doe that we may attain life everlasting". But if Reason was weak in this area that did not mean that it was powerless in the realm that pertained to man "civilly associated". In this Hooker was following a classical Reformed line unlike the Puritans who argued that because of the fall Reason was powerless in every realm and thus Scripture had to direct explicitly in the minutiae of life. In turn, it was seen that Hooker's understanding of Reason could be utilised to explain the discrepancies in two Hooker scholars, Peter Munz and Gunnar Hillerdal. According to Munz Hooker was a rationalist and according to Hillerdal he was a fideist. It was argued that both Hillerdal and Munz has not taken into account the distinction that Hooker permits between the various realms in which Reason operates.

If Hooker's use of Reason was so compatible with Luther and Calvin and so at variance with the Puritans could the same be said with his approach to Tradition? It was discovered that Hooker, Luther and Calvin all revered Tradition. Hooker, for example, argued for the retention of Episcopacy on the basis that it had existed in the Church for "a thousand five hundred years and upward". Similarly Luther and Calvin were content to follow the Tradition of the Church provided it was not contrary to Scripture. In these ways they differed

from the Puritans who were reluctant to follow the thinking of the ages in that, very early on in her life, the Church had collapsed and virtually ceased to exist. In this vacuum they were constrained to develop new orders of Church government and to make Presbyterianism one of the marks of the Church, a step never contemplated by Calvin. Like Hooker, Calvin would argue that Church order is distinct from Church doctrine and Hooker could even say that even though Tradition with respect to Episcopal ordering was ancient it was not to be regarded as the *esse* of the Church. If this Hooker position then it is surprising that J.S. Marshall was content to argue that Hooker's view of the Ministry and Church order is, to all intents and purposes, that of Catholic sacramentalism with all its emphasis of the traditional three-fold order. Once more Hooker's reformed commitment is obscured.

In our final chapter Hooker's approach to Scripture was discussed. Here it was argued that the Puritans view that "Scripture is the only rule of all things which in this life may be done by men" was not a view held by Hooker or the magisterial Reformers. For Hooker, Luther and Calvin such a position could only serve to obliterate radically the real message of Scripture which was to make men wise unto salvation. Scripture for these Reformers was read Christologically which enabled them to hold fast to the Biblical text which pointed to Christ whilst at the arguing that not all of Scripture was to be read literally. Here Hooker argued that Scripture should be read spiritually and not as if "legally meant" and this is what so divided the mainstream Reformation from its more radical tendencies. Both Luther and Calvin held to a Christocentric reading of the

Bible that enabled them to distinguish correctly between that which was permanently binding and that which was meant for an earlier historical situation. In this connection it was demonstrated with reference to W.P Haugaard that what he sees as so unique to Hooker and Anglicanism was in fact an approach that was common to the Reformation as a whole.

This summary has now brought the thesis to a close. It has been the intention of this thesis to argue that Hooker's debt to the Reformation was much closer and profound than has been generally recognised. It has been argued that Hooker's celebrated use of Reason, Tradition and Scripture was not something unique either to Hooker in particular or to Anglicanism in general. If this is the case then both Hooker's and the modern understanding of the Church of England's true theological position both need to be re-examined. It is hoped that this thesis might act as a small catalyst to that end.



Chapter One: Richard Hooker: Theologian of the Church of England (pp.1-19).

1. Paul Avis, *Anglicanism and the Christian Church*, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1989, p.47. Avis claims that Hooker, along with Richard Field "laid the foundations of Anglican ecclesiology."
2. J.S. Marshall, *Hooker and the Anglican Tradition*, A & C Black, London, 1963, p.v, vii.
3. Aidan Nichols, *The Panther and the Hind A theological History of Anglicanism* T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1993, p.43. See also R.K. Faulkner, *Richard Hooker and the Politics of a Christian England*, London and Los Angeles, 1981, p.18 where he states "for most of the Elizabethan period the Church of England failed to develop a theology of its own...During the whole of what might be called the formative period of reformed theology, there is not something which one might call an English school of theology but only English theologians influenced by Wittenburg, or Zurich, or Geneva, or Strasburg. Not until the end of the reign did the Church produce in Hooker, anyone who might be called a really great constructive and original thinker."
4. Louis Weil, "The Gospel in Anglicanism", *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. Stephen Sykes and John Booty, SPCK/Fortress Press, London and Philadelphia, 1988, p.67. John Booty, "Hooker and Anglicanism", *Studies in Richard Hooker*, ed. W.S. Hill, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland and London, 1972, p.231.
5. Egil Grislis, "The Hermeneutical Problem in Richard Hooker", *Studies in Richard Hooker*, *ibid.*, p.161. According to Grislis it was last century that concerted attempts were made to prise Hooker away from Calvin and Reformed theology.
6. See Stephen Sykes, "Richard Hooker and the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood", *After Eve: Women, Theology and the Christian Tradition*, ed., J.M. Soskice, Marshall Pickering.
7. Gunnar Hillerdal, *Reason and Revelation in Richard Hooker*, Lund Universitets Arsskrift, Lund, 1962. Hillerdal thinks that Hooker fails to reconcile the twin roles of Reason and Revelation and is forced to "turn to a kind of irrationalism" (p.135). Concluding, Hillerdal feels justified "to state quite openly that Hooker actually failed to reconcile reason with revelation" (p.148).
8. Stephen Sykes, in *The Integrity of Anglicanism*, Mowbray, London and Oxford, 1978, laments the current theological confusion in the Church of England. His first chapter is headed "The Crisis of Anglican Comprehensiveness" whereas chapters four and five are respectively titled "Does 'Anglican Theology' exist?" and "Does 'Anglican Method' exist?." In the book Sykes argues that the

Church of England's willingness to surrender her doctrine has called into question her theological integrity.

9. This may seem to be a controversial question to ask but theological ambiguity does appear to be evident and, furthermore, this ambiguity is present not because of the complimentary nature of the various theological opinions but rather because they are inimical to each other. For example, with regard to the Church's understanding of marriage, important in any discussions over the thorny problem over divorce and the propriety of remarriage, an already difficult conundrum, is exacerbated as members of the Synod are disagreed over whether marriage is a sacrament or covenant; which greatly affects any conclusions that might otherwise be reached. As Mr. O.W.H. Clark reported in the General Synod "as a Church we are divided here." See the *Report of Proceedings*, General Synod, July Group of Sessions, 1983, 14, 2, p.475. Consequently, any hope of arriving at a coherent theological response to this acute pastoral problem is much diminished. Even so, when a theological response is finally published, as in the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission's *Final Report* ambiguous language is used that only serves to confuse, rather than illuminate the topics under discussion. Referring to Christ's self offering on Calvary the *Report* went on to say that in the eucharist the faithful also "enter into the movement of his self offering." *ARCIC: The Final Report*, SPCK/CTS, London, 1982, p.14. This ambiguous phraseology was immediately picked up by the Church of England Evangelical Council who published *Evangelical Anglicans and the ARCIC Final Report*, CEEC, 1982, who asked "if Christ's self offering was unique and unrepeatable, how can the Church 'enter into the movement of his self offering'?" p.6. Perhaps the most obvious recent example of theological confusion centres on the legislation promulgated to allow women to be ordained to the priesthood. Having taken this step the legislation allows individual bishops, clergy and parishes to repudiate female presbyteral ministry, notwithstanding Canon A 4. The status of these new priests is therefore severely questioned even in the very legislation that allowed their ordinations to proceed. Further doubt and confusion was then spread by the *Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993* where it was confessed that the "rightness *or otherwise*" of the Church's decision had to be further tested (emphasis mine). See the *Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993*, p.1. That this way of doing theology can only result in confusion is reflected in the Doctrine Commission's book *We believe in God*, Church House Printing, London, 1987, p.32 where they pose the question "Where, then, is the unity? If the Church (as opposed to the churches) is to become fully itself, it will not do so by attempting to achieve a doctrinal definition to which all can assent.." But, it has to be asked, if this is true why do we bother with the creeds?

10. J.I. Packer and R.T Beckwith, in *The Thirty-Nine Articles: Their Place and Use Today*, Latimer Study 20-21, Latimer House, Oxford, 1984, pp.21-29, contend that the Thirty-Nine Articles, which if anything expresses the Church's of England's doctrine, have, at present, no voice in Anglican theology, liturgy or community. With the Church's doctrinal voice muted this has led to "a problem of Anglican identity."

11. The pioneer of this appraisal is W.J. Torrance Kirby, *Richard Hooker's Doctrine of the Royal Supremacy*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1990. Kirby's book is ground breaking in showing Hooker's close doctrinal connection to the Reformation. Kirby's influence on this thesis is readily acknowledged especially in the early chapters where much raw material has been provided by him. His fruitful discussions of the relationship between Hooker and the magisterial Reformers were especially illuminating. However, the thesis goes on to explore areas left untouched by Kirby.

12. John Keble, "Preface to the First Edition of the Life of Hooker", *The Works of Mr. Richard Hooker*, Oxford, 1845, 1, p.cvi-cvii. Peter Lake agrees with Keble. He writes in *Anglicans and Puritans? Presbyterian and English Conformist thought from Whitgift to Hooker*, Unwin Hyman, London, 1988 p.153 that Hooker's view of reason is so broad that it was something that was transformed into something "very different which passed for orthodox among most Elizabethan protestants." Cf. H.G Reventlow, *The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World*, SCM Press Ltd, p.118. Reventlow writes "The picture of man which underlies Hooker's view is not that of the Reformation."

13. See Egil Grislis, "The Hermeneutical Problem in Richard Hooker", *op. cit.*, pp.159-167 and W.J. Torrance Kirby, *op. cit.*, pp.33-41.

14. T.F. Henderson, in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., 13:673, cited in E. Grislis, *op. cit.*, p.162.

15. E. Grislis, *op. cit.*, p.163.

16. Hardin Craig, "Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Polity-First Form", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 5, 1944, p.94, cited E. Grislis, *op. cit.*, p.163.

17. Herschel Baker, *The Image of Man: A Study of the Idea of Human Dignity in Classical Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance*, New York, Harper and Row, 1961, p.290 cited in E. Grislis, *op. cit.*, p.163.

18. E. Grislis, *op. cit.*, p.165.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Kavanagh, "Reason and Nature in Hooker's Polity", p.101, cited E. Grislis, *op. cit.*, p.166.

21. This concept of the Church of England as a *via media* now dominates most Anglican ways of thought and it is interesting to see how it is being used in high level ecumenical discussion. Christopher Hill, for example, argues in *Together in Mission and Ministry The Porvoo Common Statement*, Church House Publishing, London, 1993, p.130, that "A scholarly apologetic for the Anglican position was developed during Elizabeth's reign, most notably by Bishop John Jewel of Salisbury and his even more famous protégé, Richard Hooker. The

necessity for national reform was defended; appeal was made to the Scriptures, the Fathers and Reason (though not as equals); the notion of a *via media* between Rome and Geneva was propagated..." J.E. Booty, "Standard Divines", *The Study of Anglicanism, op.cit.*, p.164 claims that Hooker, as one of the "standard divines" adheres to the "*via media*." C.M. Thornburg, *Original Sin Justification and Sanctification in the Thought of two Sixteenth Century Divines: John Jewel and Richard Hooker*, The Hartford Seminary Foundation, Ph.D., 1975, p.184 argues that "while Jewel formulated the position of the English Church concerning justification,...it remained for Hooker to articulate the distinctive Anglican position on the relationship between grace and human nature in the process of sanctification. His conclusions embody the characteristic Anglican middle way..."

22. W.J. Torrance Kirby, *op. cit.*, p.34.

23. See, for example, J.H. Newman, *Lectures on the Prophetic Office of the Church viewed relatively to Romanism and Popular Protestantism*, London, 1837.

24. J.H. Newman, *op. cit.*, p.20.

25. J.H. Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, Everyman, London, 1912, p.148.

26. It is most notably Peter Munz who has seen the influence of Aquinas on Hooker. His book *The Place of Hooker in the History of Thought*, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1971 has proved influential. Munz argues that Hooker allied himself with Aquinas against a Augustinian-Puritan axis. The earlier Augustinians "had tended to deny that there was a sphere of life with which reason could deal competently and autonomously" (p.46). Aquinas had "turned against these theories" and when Hooker was confronted with the same arguments in the Puritans it was natural that he should look to Aquinas for support. J.S. Marshall, *op. cit.*, p.77 claims that "Hooker accepts the sixteenth century Thomism of Cardinal Cajetan" and on p.90 he writes that "Hooker takes care to exhibit his general adherence to the Thomistic doctrine of nature...."

27. W.J. Torrance Kirby, *op. cit.*, p.38.

28. J.I Packer in his "Introduction" to Martin Luther's *The Bondage of the Will*, James Clark & Co Ltd, Cambridge, 1973, pp.13-61 gives a valuable theological account of the differences between Luther and Erasmus.

29. W.J. Torrance Kirby, *op. cit.*, p.39.

30. J.I. Packer, *op. cit.*, p.48 writes "Standing in the semi-Pelagian Scholastic tradition [Erasmus] champions the view that, though sin has weakened man, it has not made him utterly incapable of meritorious action; in fact, says, Erasmus, the salvation of those who are saved is actually determined by a particular meritorious act which they perform in their own strength without Divine assistance." M.M. Phillips, in *Erasmus and the Northern Renaissance*, The

Boydell Press, Suffolk, 1981, p.138 argues Erasmus taught that in the process of salvation "man co-operates by opening his mind to God's grace." If man co-operates with God in opening his mind to receive God's grace then that is obviously a meritorious action. Peter Lake, *op. cit.*, is the most recent author to propagate this view. He writes that it is through a "hierarchy of laws" that provided a natural route to God"(pp.148 and 149). Accordingly Lake is convinced that Hooker was reacting against many "central features of Elizabethan Calvinist divinity" and thereby producing "a distinctive and novel vision of what English protestant religion was or rather ought to be" (p.146).

31. W.J. Torrance Kirby, *op. cit.*, p.39. The *via media* case is now so well entrenched that any doctrine that Hooker touches is immediately presumed to be a doctrine that enhances the *via media*. So L. Gibbs argues that Hooker holds to the *via media* in the key areas of Justification and Repentance. See L. Gibbs, "Richard Hooker's *Via media* Doctrine of Justification", *Harvard Theological Review*, 74:2, 1981, pp.211-220 and "Richard Hooker's *Via media* Doctrine of Repentance", *Harvard Theological Review*, 84:1, 1991, pp.59-74.

32. E. Grislis, *op. cit.*, p.161.

33. "A Christian Letter" is to be found, together with Hooker's Autograph Notes, in *Lawes: Attack and Response* ed. J. Booty, Harvard University Press, 4, 1982, pp.1-79.

34. "A Christian Letter", *op. cit.*, p.7. Richard Bauckham in his essay "Hooker, Travers and the Church of Rome in the 1580's", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 29, 1978, pp.37-50 demonstrates how Puritan suspicions of Hooker were so aroused that the whole controversy between Hooker and Travers sprang from one sentence in one of Hooker sermons.

35. Richard Hooker, *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Polity*, 4.13.9, 1, p.334, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass, 1977. All references to the *Lawes* are taken from the Folger Library Edition of Richard Hooker's works and I shall give the section in the *Lawes* where the reference is to be found along with the volume number of the Folger Edition and the page.

36. John Jewel and Heinrich Bullinger cited in C. Sydney Carter, *The Anglican Via Media*, Thynne & Jarvis Ltd, London, 1927, p.34.

37. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, Preface 1.3, 1, p.3. Cited W.J. Torrance Kirby, *op. cit.*, p.19.. Kirby writes "Hooker's purpose was to demonstrate that, on the one hand, the established ecclesiastical order was wholly in accord with reformed orthodoxy and that, on the other hand, it was a "misconceit" which failed to admit this but went on urging a "further reformation" (p.21).

38. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, Preface 7.1, 1, p.34.

39. The writers who have sought to argue this are most notably P.E. Hughes, *Faith and Works: Cranmer and Hooker on Justification*, Morehouse-Barlow

4. Peter Munz, *op cit.*, p.62. Munz maintains that Hooker went much further than St. Thomas and was unable to sustain Aquinas' carefully constructed theology. For a fuller discussion of the respective approaches adopted by Hillerdal and Munz with reference to Hooker see C.M. Thornburg, *Original Sin, Justification and Sanctification in the thought of two Sixteenth-Century Divines: John Jewel and Richard Hooker*, *op cit.*, pp.87-90. I am indebted to Thornburg's work. He comes close to Kirby's analysis of the two kingdoms arguing that reason and revelation correspond to mans natural and supernatural ends and the two cannot be confused.
5. W.J. Torrance Kirby, *op. cit.*, pp.45-51 & 67-79.
6. W.J. Torrance Kirby, *op. cit.*, p.18.
7. "A Christian Letter", *op. cit.*, p.6.
8. "A Christian Letter", *op. cit.*, p.7. The authors write "we have compared your positions and assertions in your long discourses, unto the articles of religion sett forth Anno Domini 1562."
9. *Ibid.*
10. W.J. Torrance Kirby, *op. cit.*, p.32.
11. "A Christian Letter", *op. cit.*, p.71.
12. "A Christian Letter", *op. cit.*, p.65-67.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. See Walter Travers, "A supplication made to the Council", *Tractates and Sermons*, ed. Laetitia Yeandle, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1990, p.198. Travers writes, ".when I urged the consent of all churches, and good writers, against him that I knew, and desyred, if it were otherwise, to understand what authours he had followed in such doctrine: he aunswered me, that his best authour was his owne reason...."
16. "A Christian Letter", *op. cit.*, p.11.
17. "A Christian Letter", *op. cit.*, p.8.
18. For this view see Martin Luther, "The Last Sermon in Wittenberg, 1546", *Luther's Works*, Concordia, Philadelphia, 51, pp.371-380. This sermon has become a *locus classicus* as regards the invective Luther heaps upon reason.
19. M.M. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p.110.

Co. Inc., Wilton, Conn., 1982 and G. Morrell, *The Systematic Theology of Richard Hooker*, Th.D. dissertation, Pacific School of Religion, 1969. Morrell writes that "Hooker's emphasis upon the supremacy of Holy Scripture, his rejection of the Papacy, his disavowal of the doctrine of merit, his insistence upon the doctrine of justification by faith, all would suggest that Hooker's orientation was..reformed.."(p.18). To this list we may also add W.J. Torrance Kirby.

40. P.E. Hughes, *op. cit.*, p.40-41.

41. W.J Torrance Kirby argues that Hooker's use of Reason is compatible with a Reformed use of Reason and I am indebted to Kirby at this point. Kirby does not, however, move into the areas covered by Tradition and Scripture.

42. Thomas Cartwright is the obvious choice to use as the Puritans' spokesman. Not only was Cartwright a prominent opponent of the establishment, Rudolph Almsy claims in his essay "Richard Hooker's Address to the Presbyterians", *Anglican Theological Review*, 61, 1979, p.462 that in his polemics "Hooker concentrated initially on refuting Thomas Cartwright's arguments" because he was the "leading voice behind the nonconformists." Almsy further develops his argument in "The Purpose of Richard Hooker's Polemic", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 39, 1978, pp.251-270. Here he asserts that "Cartwright was uppermost in Hooker's mind"(p.254).

43. Luther and Calvin are, by any standard, leading Reformed thinkers. If Hooker can be shown to hold to the same broad theological consensus provided by Luther and Calvin then much of the aim of this thesis will have been met.

## Chapter Two: Richard Hooker and the Authority of Reason (pp. 20-66).

1. See, for example, Stephen Neill, *Anglicanism*, Mowbray, London & Oxford, 1977, p.123. Neill writes for Hooker Scripture is not "the only Word of God to man" and that this leads "to that *characteristic* Anglican thing, a defence of reason" (emphasis mine). Cf. A.S. McGrade, "Reason", *The Study of Anglicanism*, *op.cit.*, pp.106-117.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Gunnar Hillerdal, *op. cit.*, p.148. Hillerdal writes "Hooker only seemingly remains the philosopher who uses nothing but reason in his argument. Factually, he has all the time presupposed that everything must be understood in the light of revelation, i.e. as he understands revelation in accordance with his own Christian belief...[his] philosophical failure is evident." For an initial response to Hillerdal see Egil Grislis, "The Role of Consensus in Richard Hooker's Method of Theological Inquiry", *The Heritage of Christian Thought*, ed. R.E. Cushman and E. Grislis, Harper and Row, New York, 1965, p.76.

20. *Ibid.*
21. Desiderus Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly*, Hamilton, Adams & Co., London, 1887, p.166-167.
22. Cited by J.I. Packer, "Introduction", to Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, *op. cit.*, p.27.
23. J.I. Packer, "Introduction", *op. cit.*, p.34.
24. J.I. Packer, "Introduction", *op. cit.*, p.37.
25. J.I. Packer, "Introduction" *op. cit.*, pp.40-57.
26. M.M. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p.126.
27. Cited M.M. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p.127.
28. M.M. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p.137 writes, "Erasmus wishes to see truth victorious, he is willing to discuss the question of free will, but as a critic...."
29. See G. Morrell, *The Systematic Theology of Richard Hooker*, *op. cit.*, p.16. Morrell points to Hooker where he writes "I have endeavoured throughout the bodie of this whole discourse, that every former part might give strength unto all that followe, and every later bring some light unto all before." Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, 1.1.2, 1, p.57.
30. Basil Willey, *The English Moralists*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1964, p.102.
31. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, 1.1.3, 1, p.58.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, 1.2.6, 1, p.63.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*
36. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, 1.4.1, 1, p.70.
37. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, 1.8.9, 1, p.90.
38. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, 1.8.10, 1, p.91.
39. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, 1.11.4, 1, p.115.
40. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, 1.5.1, 1, p.72.



41. *Ibid.*
42. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 1.5.3, 1, p.74.
43. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 1.8.7, 1, p.88.
44. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 1.8.10, 1, p.91.
45. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 1.11.5, 1, p.115.
46. *Ibid.*
47. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 1.12.1, 1, p.119.
48. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 1.14.4, 1, p.129.
49. Brian Gerrish, *Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology of Luther*, Oxford, 1962, p.33 writes, "Luther...sounds the call to rebel. Aristotle is the 'father of Schoolmen', and he rules in the universities. He has become the authority in the place of Christ and the Scriptures. Instead of the Scriptures illuminating the light of nature, it is Aristotle who is used to cast light on the Scriptures."
50. So Gerrish, *op. cit.*, p.35.
51. Martin Luther, "Last Sermon in Wittenberg, 1546", *op. cit.*, p.374.
52. Martin Luther, "Last Sermon in Wittenberg, 1546", *op. cit.*, p.375.
53. Brian Gerrish, *op. cit.*, pp.19, 26, 137, 138.
54. Martin Luther, cited in B. Gerrish, *op. cit.*, p.16.
55. Martin Luther, cited in B. Gerrish, *op. cit.*, p.13.
56. *Ibid.*
57. B. Gerrish, *op. cit.*, pp.34-35.
58. W.J. Torrance Kirby, *op. cit.*, p.41-43 & 60-64.
59. Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will, op. cit.*, pp.300-301. Typical of Luther is when he writes, "Therefore, the highest virtues of the best men are 'in the flesh'; that is, they are dead, and at enmity with God, not subject to God's law nor able to be so, and not pleasing God." ".If it is only by faith we are justified, it is evident that they who are without faith are not yet justified. And those who are not justified are sinners; and sinners are evil trees and can only sin and bear

evil fruit. Wherefore, 'free-will' is nothing but the slave of sin, death and Satan, not doing anything, nor bale to do or attempt anything, but evil."

60. Martin Luther, cited in Gerrish, *op. cit.*, p.15.

61. B. Gerrish, *op. cit.*, p.22, writes, "the result of illumination by faith is that reason begins to work with an entirely new set of presuppositions, no longer those derived from experience in wordly affairs, but those which are revealed in the Scriptures."

62. B. Gerrish, *op. cit.*, p.82. ".Reason rules in the *regnum mundi*; and, even if it may never rule in the *regnum Christi* (otherwise the kingdom would not be Christ's), yet it may serve there, once it has been redeemed by faith."

63. J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1536, H.H. Meeter Center/W.B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI., 1986, p.15.

64. J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, W.B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1957, 1.1.1, 1, p.65.

65. W.J. Torrance Kirby, *op. cit.*, p.43. Kirby asserts that "the same doctrine of the two realms underlies the theology of Calvin" and "Luther's distinction of the "two realms" is reflected in the very structure of Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

66. J. Calvin, *Institutes*, *op. cit.*, 2.3.1, 1, p.249.

67. *Ibid.*

68. J. Calvin, *Institutes*, *op. cit.*, 2.3.2, 1, p.251.

69. *Ibid.*

70. J. Calvin, *Institutes*, *op. cit.*, 2.3.3, 1, p.252.

71. *Ibid.*

72. *Ibid.*

73. J. Calvin, *Institutes*, *op. cit.*, 2.2.12, 1, p.234.

74. J. Calvin, *Institutes*, *op. cit.*, 2.2.13, 1, p.234.

75. *Ibid.*

76. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, 1.16.5, 1, p.138.

77. Richard Hooker, "A Learned Sermon on the Nature of Pride", *Tractates and Sermons*, *op. cit.*, p.313.

78. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 1.16.5, 1, p.138.
79. Richard Hooker, "Dublin Fragments", *Lawes: Attack and Response*, Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker, *op. cit.*, Vol. 4, p.106
80. W.J. Torrance Kirby, *op. cit.*, p.15 & 34 thinks that "the most cursory perusal of the sermons and such Tracts as "On Predestination" or "Grace and Free Will" in the *Dublin Fragments* would have revealed Hooker's undeviating adherence to the doctrines of the magisterial reformers." Further on he writes "In the *Dublin Fragments* Hooker constructed his most extensive statement of his commitment to the orthodox reformed theology of grace."
81. Richard Hooker, "A Learned Discourse of Justification, Workes, and How the Foundation of Faith is Overthrowne", *Tractates and Sermons, op. cit.*, p.110.
82. Richard Hooker, "Dublin Fragments", *Lawes: Attack and Response, op. cit.*, p.140.
83. Richard Hooker, "Dublin Fragments", *op. cit.*, p.141.
84. Richard Hooker, "Dublin Fragments", *op. cit.*, p.103.
85. Richard Hooker, "A Learned Discourse of Justification", *op. cit.*, pp.115-116.
86. W.J. Torrance Kirby, *op. cit.*, p.50 shows how Hookers soteriology followed Luther and Calvin in distinguishing the "realm of faith" from the "realm of activity."
87. Richard Hooker, "Dublin Fragments", *op. cit.*, p.106.
88. *Ibid.*
89. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 2.8.2, 1, p.187.
90. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 2.8.3, 1, p.188.
91. *Ibid.*
92. Philip Hughes, *op. cit.*, p.40-41.
93. G. Hillerdal, *op. cit.*, p.148. Hillerdal refuses to see the complementarity of the differing spheres in which grace and reason operate. He seems to think that because the saving knowledge of God cannot be obtained outside of God's grace this means that "from the point of view of a strict theory of knowledge...[this] is no solution at all...What actually happens is that Hooker claims that the Christian can move to a point over and above logical discourse and that all questions then

will be answered by the grace of God. From a strictly philosophical view-point this is, of course, an astonishing turn to a kind of irrationalism."

94. G. Hillerdal, *op. cit.*, p.95. "Reason is supposed to clarify revelation. However, the particular aid of God must first quicken reason! Reason helps us to understand the wonderful grace given in the church. However, without the grace of God reason cannot understand that this is so."

95. Peter Munz, *op. cit.*, p.62.

96. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 7.11.10, 3, p.210.

97. Peter Munz, *ibid.*

98. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 7.11.10, 3, p.210.

99. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 7.11.10, 3, p.211.

### Chapter Three: Richard Hooker and the Authority of Tradition (pp.67-126).

1. This concept of Anglican identity, which received the *imprimatur* of the whole Anglican Communion, can be found expressed in an Encyclical Letter of the 1930 Lambeth Conference. Discussing the various churches of the Anglican Communion the letter maintained that they all teach "the Catholic Faith in its entirety and in the proportions in which it is set forth in the Book of Common Prayer. They refuse...to accept any statement, or practice, as of authority, which is not consistent with the Holy Scriptures and the understanding and practice of our religion as exhibited in the undivided Church...They are both Catholic and Evangelical." "Encyclical Letter", Lambeth Conference, 1930, *The Anglican Tradition*, ed. G.R. Evans and J. Robert Wright, SPCK/Fortress Press, 1988, p.390.

2. For those who sit light to the Church's Catholic heritage and, as a consequence, freely advocate Lay Celebration, see D. Allister, *Lay presidency at the Lord's Table*, Reform discussion Paper No 5, Reform. D. Allister never discusses the objection that such a move is a unilateral break with the historic and consistent witness of the Church. For those who sit light to the Church's Reformed heritage see R.H Froude an Anglican Tractarian leader who, in 1834, could write to J. Keble, "I am everyday becoming a less and less loyal son of the Reformation." *Remains of the late Reverend Richard Hurrell Froude*, ed. J. Keble, J.H. Newman and J.B. Morely, 1, p.336, cited Aidan Nichols, *The Panther and the Hind, op. cit.*, p.124.

3. A classic example of this tendency has to be D. Cupitt, *Taking Leave of God*, SCM, London, 1980. Cf. also *The Long Legged Fly*, SCM, London, 1987.

4. W. J. Torrance Kirby, *op. cit.*, p.22. "It was an essential element in Hooker's argument to impugn the Disciplinary ecclesiology as incompatible with Reformed orthodoxy."
5. So R. Bauckham, "Hooker, Travers and the Church of Rome in the 1580's", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 29, 1978, p.41.
6. For a full account of Hooker's relationship with Calvin in which it is stated that Hooker is an "unequivocally reformed divine" and where it is shown that on central issues Hooker was close to Calvin see P.D.L Avis, "Richard Hooker and John Calvin", *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 32, 1981, p.19-28. See also R. Bauckham's response to Avis in "Richard Hooker and John Calvin: a Comment", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 32, 1981, p.29-33.
7. Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1955-, 24, p.304, quoted in Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1966, p.336.
8. *Ibid.*
9. John Calvin, "Epistle Dedicatory to Francis", *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1536 Edition, The H.H. Meeter Centre for Calvin Studies, Wm.B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1986, p.5.
10. See A.B. Ferguson's illuminating article, "The Historical Perspective of Richard Hooker: a Renaissance Paradox", *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 3, 1973, p.17-49.
11. R. Bauckham, *op. cit.*, has outlined in detail the nature of this controversy. See also Egil Grislis, "Introduction to Commentary", *Tractates and Sermons The Works of Richard Hooker*, 5, Harvard University Press, Mass., 1990, pp.641-648.
12. Richard Hooker, "The First Sermon Upon Part of S. Jude", *Tractates and Sermons, op. cit.*, 5, p.30, Quoted in Bauckham, *op. cit.*, p.40.
13. Richard Hooker, "A Learned Discourse of Justification", *Tractates and Sermons, op. cit.*, 5, p.118, Quoted in Bauckham, *op. cit.*, p.43.
14. Bauckham asserts that Hooker regarded justification by faith alone as the heart of Christianity and that the Antichristian nature of Popery can be seen in that it denies this essential doctrine. Bauckham, *op. cit.*, p.49.
15. Richard Hooker, "A Learned Discourse of Justification", *op. cit.*, p.117.
16. Richard Hooker, *ibid.*
17. Richard Hooker, "A Learned Discourse of Justification", *op. cit.*, p.118.

18. Richard Hooker, *ibid.*
19. "A Christian Letter", in *The Works of Richard Hooker*, The Folger Library, Cambridge, Mass., 4, 1982, pp. 28-29.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. For a detailed account of the role the Primitive Church played in the Anglican-Puritan controversy refer to J.K. Luoma's Ph.D. thesis, *The Primitive Church as a Normative Principle in the theology of the Sixteenth Century: the Anglican Puritan debate over Church Polity as represented by Richard Hooker and Thomas Cartwright*, Ph.D., The Hartford Seminary Foundation, 1974, *passim*.
23. Leonard J. Trinterud, ed. *Elizabethan Puritanism*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1971, p.235, quoted in Luoma, *op. cit.*, p.1 & p.4.
24. Thomas Cartwright, *A Replye To An Answere*, in Luoma, *op. cit.*, p.19.
25. Thomas Cartwright, *The Second Replye*, in Luoma, *op. cit.*, p.21.
26. Thomas Cartwright, *A Replye To An Answere*, in Luoma, *op. cit.*, p.28.
27. For this account of Cartwright's description of the growth of Episcopacy I am dependent to Luoma, *op. cit.*, pp.30-32.
28. Thomas Cartwright, *A Replye To An Answere*, in Luoma, *op. cit.*, p.29.
29. "A Christian Letter", *op. cit.*, p.29.
30. It is A.B. Ferguson, *op. cit.*, who made the point that Hooker was forced into a deeply historical approach due to the "radically unhistorical appeal of the Puritans."
31. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, Preface.1.2, 1, p.2.
32. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, Preface.2.4, 1, p.6.
33. Richard Hooker, *ibid.*
34. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, 2.7.9, 1, p.185.
35. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, Preface.3.6, 1, p.15.
36. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, Preface.3.9, 1, p.16.
37. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, Preface.8.7, 1, p.44.

38. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, Preface.8.12, 1, p.49.
39. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 5.10.1, 2, p.46. For a detailed analysis of Hooker's treatment of the concepts of catholicity and consensus see Egil Grislis "The Role of Consensus in Richard Hooker's Method of Theological Inquiry", in *The Heritage of Christian Thought, Essays in Honour of Robert Lowry Calhoun*, ed., R.E. Cushman & E. Grislis, Harper & Row, New York, 1965, pp. 64-88 and also E. Grislis, "Richard Hooker's Method of Theological Inquiry", *Anglican Theological Review*, 45, 1963, pp.190-203. Luoma, *op. cit.*, p.84 writes "the key word in Hooker's employment of the Fathers is consensus."
40. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, Preface.2.7, 1, p.10.
41. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 5.10.1, 2, p.46-47.
42. *Ibid.*
43. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 4.14.2, 1, p.337.
44. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 4.13.9, 1, p.334.
45. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 5.8.2, 2, p.38.
46. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 1.14.3, 1, p.127-8.
47. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, Preface.2.8, 1, pp.26-27.
48. E. Grislis, "The Role of Consensus", *op. cit.*, p.84-85.
49. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 1.13.2, 1, p.123.
50. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 5.8.2, 2, p.39.
51. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 5.7.1, 2, p.34.
52. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 4.14.1, 1, p.337.
53. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 4.14.1, 1, p.336.
54. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 5.8.3, 2, p.39.
55. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 7.1.4, 3, p.147.
56. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 7.5.1, 3, p.159.
57. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 7.11.5, 3, p.207.

58. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 4.14.1, 1, p.337. See also E. Grislis "Richard Hooker's Method of Theological Inquiry", *op. cit.*, p. 204, where he writes, "true catholicity is recognised by the presence of a doctrine not only in one age but by having been believed throughout the entire Christian history" and "Hooker is not limiting the consensus to one regional Church."
59. J.K. Luoma, *op. cit.*, p.42 writes "For Hooker each age of the church is equally close to God, and each has its special contribution and insight."
60. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 7.13.2, 3, p.213.
61. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 4.9.1, 1, p.301.
62. *Ibid.*
63. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 4.14.4, 1, p.339.
64. That Hooker does not deny that parts of the Church have suffered from moral and doctrinal lapse and decay is clearly seen in his *A Learned Discourse of Justification* where he reflects on the corruptions attendant on the Church of Rome.
65. A.B. Ferguson, *op. cit.*, *passim.*, also J.G. Hughes, *The Theology of Richard Hooker*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Leeds, 1979, p.7 where we read that Hooker's "secondary appeal" after "scripture apprehended by reason" is to the "undivided church of antiquity."
66. A.B. Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p.27, writes "Adaptation to variable circumstances runs through Hooker's treatment of the history of episcopacy like a leitmotif." For a full account of Hooker's views on episcopacy see M.R. Somerville "Richard Hooker and his Contemporaries on Episcopacy: an Elizabethan Consensus", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 35, 1984, pp.177-187.
67. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 7.5.2, 3, p.160.
68. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 3.2.1, 1, p.207.
69. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, Preface, 4.4, 1, p.24.
70. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 3.2.2, 1, p.209. Stephen Sykes, in a paper that deals with Hooker and the ordination of women, makes much of this distinction in Hooker. Sykes argues that "it is possible to hold both that a particular church order is divinely ordained and also that it is not immutable." Sykes highlights how Hooker can be used to distinguish between what is adaptable and what is perpetual in Christianity. Sykes is especially illuminating on Hooker at this point. See Stephen Sykes, "Richard Hooker and the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood", *After Eve: Women Theology and the Christian Tradition, op. cit.*



71. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 3.1.4, 1, p.196. According to Sykes this is the first English use of the term "the verie essence of Christianitie." Sykes, *op. cit.*, p.126.
72. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 3.5.1, 1, p.214.
73. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 3.2.2, 1, p.208-209.
74. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 3.1.3, 1, p.196.
75. John Jewel, *An Apology of the Church of England*, ed. J.E. Booty, Cornell University Press, New York, 1963, p.10-11.
76. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 3.1.10, 1, p.201.
77. John Calvin, "Epistle Dedicatory to Francis", *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1536 Edition, *op. cit.*, p.5. For an extensive treatment of Calvin's understanding of the Fathers and the Primitive Church to which I am much in debt see A.N.S. Lane, "Calvin's Use of the Fathers and Medievals", *Calvin Theological Journal*, 16, 1981, pp.149-205.
78. Thomas Cranmer, "Answer unto Stephen Gardyner", *Remains*, ed. Henry Jenkyns, 4 vols., Oxford, 1833, quoted in W.M. Southgate, *John Jewel and the Problem of Doctrinal Authority*, Harvard University Press, Mass, 1962, p. 174.
79. See the account of this interview in *Here I Stand*, R.H. Bainton, Mentor Books, New York, 1955, pp. 72-73.
80. Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke*, Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Weimar, 1883-, 38, 206, quoted in Paul Althaus, *op. cit.*, p.338.
81. For an account of how Luther viewed the existence of the Church throughout history and the precise nature of its "fall" see J.M. Headley, *Luther's View of Church History*, Yale University Press, New Haven And London, 1963, pp. 106-161. I am much indebted to Headley.
82. Martin Luther, "Lectures on Genesis", in *Luther's Works*, 2, 1960, p.12 also quoted in Headley, *op. cit.*, p.158.
83. So Headley, *op. cit.*, writes that "Luther never denies the fact of apostasy in Church history. Indeed he recognises continual apostasy as integral to its nature. Nevertheless, the true, hidden Church always remains", p.160.
84. Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke, op. cit.*, 4, 188, in Headley, *op. cit.*, p.99.
85. J.D. Trigg, *Baptism in the Theology of Martin Luther*, E.J. Brill, 1994, p.52.

86. P. Avis, *The Church in the Theology of the Reformers*, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, London, 1981, p.25.
87. John Calvin, "Epistle Dedicatory to Francis", *op. cit.*, p.6. For the observation that Calvin's appeal to tradition was essentially an appeal to scripture see A.N.S. Lane, *op. cit.*, p.165.
88. John Calvin, "Reply by John Calvin to Letter by Cardinal Sadolet to Senate and People of Geneva", *Tracts and Treatises on the Reformation of the Church*, Wm.B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich, 1958, 1, p.46.
89. John Calvin, *op. cit.*, p.37.
90. For Calvin's view of the Church's fall see A.N.S. Lane, *op. cit.*, p179-183.
91. John Calvin, *Commentary on Daniel*, quoted in W.J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin A Sixteenth Century Portrait*, Oxford University Press, 1988, p.82.
92. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Wm. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1957, 1.11.13, 1, p.101 quoted in Lane, *op. cit.*, p.174.
93. For a fuller account of the "marks" of the Church's fall see Lane, *op. cit.*, p.179.
94. John Calvin, *Tracts*, Calvin Translation Society, 3.89, in Lane, *op. cit.*, p.180.
95. John Calvin, "Reply to Sadolet", *op. cit.*, p.39.
96. W.J. Bouwsma, *op. cit.*, p.222, makes this precise point. He claims that Calvin could be "flexible, politic, accommodating to circumstance, considerate of human weakness and need, and above all practical."
97. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, *op. cit.*, IV.1.12., pp.291-292, also Bouwsma, *op. cit.*, p.223.
98. John Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.4.2, 2, p.328.
99. John Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.4.2, 2, p.329.
100. John Calvin, *Commentary on I Corinthians*, quoted in Bouwsma, *op. cit.*, p.223.
101. John Calvin, *Commentary on Matthew*, quoted in Bouwsma, *op. cit.*, p.224.
102. John Calvin, *Supplex Exhortatio*, CO VI, 493, quoted in Bouwsma, *op. cit.*, p.224.

103. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op.cit.*, 3.2.2, 1, p.208.
104. It has been suggested, for example, that because Book 7 is not wholly written by Hooker it suffered later amendments. Others have said Hooker is simply being inconsistent. See M.R. Somerville, "Richard Hooker and his Contemporaries on Episcopacy: An Elizabethan Consensus", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 35, 2, 1984, pp.177-179.
105. M.R. Somerville, *op.cit.*, p.187.
106. J.S. Marshall, *Hooker and the Anglican Tradition*, A & C Black, London, 1963, p.150.
107. J.S. Marshall, *op.cit.*, p.151.
108. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op.cit.*, 5.78.3, 2, 439.
109. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op.cit.*, 5.67.6, 2, 334.
110. J.S. Marshall, *op.cit.*, p.149.
111. Paul Avis, *Anglicanism and the Christian Church*, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1989, p.81-82.
112. *Ibid.*
113. *Ibid.*

#### Chapter Four: Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture (pp.127-202)

1. Lee Gibbs, "Theology, Logic and Rhetoric in the Temple Controversy Between Richard Hooker and Walter Travers", *Anglican Theological Review*, 65, 1983, p.186. D.W. Hardy in *The Modern Theologians*, 2, ed. D.F. Ford, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, claims that Hooker "sums up the characteristic vision of English theology." The "characteristic vision" is that the "present organised practice" of the Church was to be taken as trustworthy and true. This being the case "current church practice" becomes the "medium through which..Scripture and church laws" were to be considered rationally, pp.30-32. Hardy seems to suggest that the Anglican vision is to read Scripture in the light of common practice rather than evaluate common practice in the light of Scripture. To be sure, Hooker did hold to the then current practice of the Church of England but only because he was already convinced that there was nothing explicitly contrary to Scripture in the organised life of the sixteenth century Church of England.
2. P.E. More, "The Spirit of Anglicanism", in *Anglicanism*, ed., P.E. More and F.L. Cross, S.P.C.K, London, 1951, p.xxii.

3. That Hooker was not as impartial as many would like to think and that he was somehow above polemical argument and debate is called into question by A.S. McGrade who states that "every line of the *Laws* does in fact have a controversial point. If one takes it that that point is always to support the existing command structure of the English Church against a threat of change from below, Hooker can only be depicted as an arch-polemicist and establishment ideologue." See McGrade's introduction *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Richard Hooker, ed., A.S. McGrade, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, p.xviii. See also Peter Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?: Presbyterian and Conformist thought from Whitgift to Hooker*, *op. cit.* Lake believes that "for all its judiciousness of tone, Hooker's book was the conformist equivalent of the Marprelate tracts." Cf. p.187 where Lake writes "Hooker responded by heaping contempt on the learning of his adversaries in a way which must call into question the notion that he was a man of irenic instincts who found controversy uncongenial." W.D.J. Cargill Thompson has also suggested that Hooker deliberately exaggerated the Puritan position. See W.D.J. Cargill Thompson, "The Philosopher of the Politic Society", *Studies in Richard Hooker*, ed. W. Speed Hill, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland and London, 1972, p.24. See also Richard Almasy, "Richard Hooker's Address to the Presbyterians", *Anglican Theological Review*, 61, 4, 1979, pp.462-474.

4. Peter Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?*, *op. cit.*, p.154 & p.187.

5. W.P. Haugaard, "The Scriptural Hermeneutics of Richard Hooker", *This Sacred History*, ed., D.S. Armentrout, Cowley Publications, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1990, p.164.

6. And yet Hooker's view of the fall follows classical Reformed lines *pace* H.G Reventlow who insists that "the picture of man which underlies Hooker's view is not that of the Reformation, in which the recognition of the totality of sin is the dominant motive", *The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World*, *op. cit.*, p.118. For Hooker man in his natural (i.e. post lapsarian) state can "nether know nor acknowledge the thinges of God...because they are spiritually discerned." Moreover his Reason is "darkned...with the foggie damp of original corruption." ("A Learned and Comfortable Sermon of the Certainie and Perpetuitie of Faith in the Elect", in *Tractates and Sermons*, *op. cit.*, p.69 & p.71.) Due to sin human nature has become so perverted that it lies moribund unable to reach God apart from the working of Divine grace. "Through sinne our nature hath taken that disease and weaknes, whereby of itself it inclineth only unto evill. The naturall powers and faculties therefore of mans minde are through our native corruption soe weakened and of themselves soe averse from God, that without the influence of his special grace, they bring forth nothing in his sight acceptable, noe nott the blossoms or least budds that tend to the fruit of eternal life." ("Dublin Fragments", *Laws: Attack and Response*, *op. cit.*, p.103.) Thus Hooker's view of Reason is not Thomistic. St. Thomas taught that reason operating in its own area of competence did not need grace. For Hooker, even when Reason is operating in its own sphere it must have God's grace in order to work effectively for "there is no kind of faculty or power in man or any other creature, which can rightly performe the functions allotted to it without perpetual

aid and concurrence of that supreme cause of all things. The benefit whereof as oft as we cause God in his justice to withdraw, there can no other thing follow, then that which the Apostle noteth, even men indued with the light of reason to walk notwithstanding in the vanitie of their minde, having their cogitations darkned, and being strangers from the life of God through the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardnes of their harts." (*Lawes, op. cit.*, 1.8.11, 1, p.92.) Elsewhere, stressing societies need to frame laws Hooker thinks that "lawes.. are never framed as they should be, unlesse presuming the will of man to be inwardly obstinate, rebellious, and averse from all obedience unto the sacred lawes of his nature: in a word, unlesse presuming man to be in regard of his depraved minde little better then a wild beast.." (*Lawes, op. cit.*, 1.10.1, 1, p.96.) If this is Hooker's view of man's fallen condition it seems remarkable that Lake can write "Hooker's vision of sin as a species of ignorance, a sort of intellectual laziness [is] almost benign." Peter Lake, *op. cit.*, p.150.

7. John Field and Thomas Wilcox, "An Admonition to Parliament", in *The Reformation of the Church*, ed., Iain Murray, The Banner of Truth Trust, London, 1965, p.85. Although the Admonition was anonymous both Field and Wilcox were arrested and admitted to being its authors. Murray, *op. cit.*, p.83. See also Patrick Collinson, 'John Field and Elizabethan Puritanism', in Patrick Collinson, *Godly People*, Hambledon Press, London, 1983, pp.339-40.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*

11. Field and Wilcox, *op. cit.*, p.90.

12. H.G. Reventlow, *op. cit.*, pp.91-184.

13. William Tyndale, *Pentateuch*, ed., J.I. Mombert, quoted in H.G. Reventlow, *op. cit.*, p.107.

14. H.G. Reventlow, *op. cit.*, p.109. It should be noted that not all scholars accept that Tyndale moved significantly from Luther or that he was the "founder" of English Puritan theology. L.J. Trinterud, 'A reappraisal of William Tyndale's debt to Martin Luther', *Church History*, 31, 1962, pp.24-45, argues that Tyndale did act as the predecessor to the Puritans. This is contested by M. McGiffert, 'William Tyndale's conception of Covenant', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 32, 1981.

15. William Turner, *The Huntying and Finding out of the Romish Fox*, quoted in Reventlow, p.110.

16. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 3.5.1, 1, p.215.

17. John Hooper, "The Regulative Principle and Things Indifferent", in *The Reformation of the Church*, ed., I. Murray, *op. cit.*, p.55; cf. Reventlow, *op. cit.*, p.112-113.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. H.G. Reventlow, *op. cit.*, p.113.
21. So H.G. Reventlow persuasively argues. "Against this background it is also not surprising that for Hooper there is only one covenant and that the Church of the Old and New Testaments is one and the same. The covenant concluded with Adam after the Fall (Gen.3.15) still holds today, but it binds God in his offer of grace *only insofar as people respond to him by being obedient to his commandments*. H.G. Reventlow, *op. cit.*, p.113 (emphasis mine).
22. Thomas Cranmer to the privy Council, 7 October 1552, quoted in H.G. Reventlow, *op. cit.*, p.113.
23. H.G. Reventlow, *op. cit.*, p.112.
24. For a full examination of Cartwright's theology see J.S. Coolidge, *The Pauline Renaissance in England*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1970, pp.1-22; J.K. Luoma, *The Primitive Church as a Normative Principle in the Theology of the Sixteenth Century*, *op. cit.*, *passim.*, and H.G. Reventlow, *op. cit.*, pp.115-116.
25. Thomas Cartwright, *The Second Reply*, quoted in J.K. Luoma, *op. cit.*, p.54.
26. Thomas Cartwright *A Replye to an Answer*, quoted in J.K. Luoma, *op. cit.*, p.50.
27. For a discussion of the radical Reformation's use of the Old Testament see P.D.L. Avis, "Moses and the Magistrate", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 26, 2, 1975, pp.149-172. For modern day attempts to apply the continuing validity of Old Testament judicial law see G.L. Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, Phillipsburg, New Jersey, 1977.
28. Thomas Cartwright, "Letter to Arthur Hildersham" in *Cartwrightiana*, ed., A. Peel and L.H. Carlson, George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1951, p.112.
29. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, 3.5.1, 1, p.215.
30. Thomas Cartwright, "Letter to Arthur Hildersham", *op. cit.*, p.110-111.
31. Field and Wilcox, *op. cit.*, p.85.

32. Thomas Cartwright, in *The Works of John Whitgift*, ed., A.J. Ayre (Parker Society), Cambridge University Press, 1851, 3 Volumes, 1, p.270. Cf. P.D.L. Avis, "Moses and the Magistrate", *op. cit.*, p.168.
33. Thomas Cartwright, *Reply to an Answer*, quoted in J.K. Luoma, *op. cit.*, p.48.
34. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, 1, p.143.
35. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, 2.1.2, 1, p.145.
36. Thomas Cartwright, "Reply to an Answer", in *The Works of John Whitgift*, *op. cit.*, p.176.
37. *Ibid.*
38. *Ibid.*
39. John Whitgift, *The Works of John Whitgift*, *op. cit.*, 3, p.576.
40. J.S. Coolidge, in *The Pauline Renaissance in England*, *op. cit.*, p.11, suggests that the whole Puritan-Conformist debate can be reduced to the way in which an action performed is perceived to be done in accordance with God's will. "Logically it makes no difference whether a proposition be said to agree or merely not to disagree with general principles found in Scripture; all the same it makes all the difference in the world in which sense an act is conceived to be directed by the word of God. The double negative, 'not against' or 'not repugnant to', expresses an indirect and incidental kind of agreement with scripture which the Puritan, though he cannot deny its logical sufficiency, finds wanting."
41. In Coolidge's words the Puritan "insists in trying to hear God's voice of command in all his thoughts and cannot feel that he is obeying God it is 'shut out'." Coolidge, *op. cit.*, *ibid.*
42. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, 2.7.5, 1, p.179.
43. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, Preface.7.1, 1, p.34.
44. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, 2.7.5, 1, p.179.
45. Peter Lake, *op. cit.*, p.152. Lake constantly denigrates Hooker's Reformed pedigree and no more so than when he refers to the "autonomous action" or "autonomous role" of reason that is needed to "make the unprocessed word surrender its payload of saving doctrine" thereby seeming to forget that Hooker was careful to deny this precise charge. In the very context in which Hooker was arguing that a proper understanding of Scripture could only be reached by a dialectic based on Reason, Scripture and the Church he writes, "I must crave that I be not so understood or construed, as if any such thing by vertue thereof could be done without the aide and assistance of Gods most blessed spirite"

(3.8.18, 1, p.234-5). Reason is not to be regarded as autonomous. Similarly, with reference to the authority of the Church Lake argues that Christians need the "testimony of the church before it could be accepted by believers as the word of God." Whilst Hooker argues that *initially* the individual is dependent on the Church who points him to the Word once he begins to read the Word for himself he discovers that it communicates to him a self-authenticating authority. This is nothing if not a doctrine of the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit that Lake expressly denies that Hooker has grasped. In Lake's understanding of Hooker's theology it seems that Scriptural authority has been completely subjected firstly to man's reason and secondly to the Church.

46. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 2.8.7, 1, p.191.

47. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 1.12.2, 1, p.123.

48. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 2.5.3, 1, p.160.

49. Article 6 "Of the Sufficiency of Holy Scripture for Salvation." See the Articles of the Church of England.

50. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 2.8.5, 1, p.189.

51. Hooker writes, for example in *Lawes, op. cit.*, 1.14.5, 1, p.129 that "they which add traditions as a part of supernaturall and necessarye truth, have not the truth, but are in error."

52. Thomas Cartwright, *Letter to Arthur Hildersham, op. cit.*, p.112.

53. Richard Hooker, "The First Sermon Upon Part of S. Jude", in *Tractates and Sermons, op. cit.*, p.15.

54. *Ibid.*

55. *Op. cit.*, p.16.

56. *Op. cit.*, p.17. It seems clear therefore that Hooker held to the full plenary inspiration of the biblical text. This however has been disputed by Egil Grislis in his essay "The Hermeneutical Problem in Richard Hooker" *Studies in Richard Hooker, op. cit.*, pp.190- 193. Grislis advances two arguments that in his view militate against Hooker holding to verbal inspiration. The first argument is based on two contrasting sets of scriptural quotation that Grislis thinks he detects in Hooker. The one set documents "the anguishing lack of insight which the writers of Scripture experienced and confessed when they spoke merely "as men" and thus without divine guidance" (Grislis, *op. cit.*, p.190). In this instance Grislis cites Job 42.3 ("therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me which I knew not.") that Hooker refers to in "The first Sermon Upon Part of St. Jude", *Tractates and Sermons, op. cit.*, p.16. But there is no suggestion either in Scripture or in Hooker that Job was here speaking without Divine guidance and at any rate all the prophets spoke "as men." The doctrine of



inspiration that Hooker holds necessitates the idea that men spoke moved by the Spirit of God. All Job was doing then was confessing that some aspects of God's being and some aspects of God's ways were beyond him and as such prompted him to speak of things that he did not know or understand. As Hooker said the writes of Scripture uttered "sillable by sillable" that which the Holy Spirit put into their mouths. Therefore, if we are to accept Hooker at face value, it would be more reasonable to assume that all the Holy Spirit was doing was providing an accurate record in Scripture of how Job felt as a mere mortal when he was confronted with knowledge about God. This seems to me to be a much more reasonable explanation on the simple basis that if this interpretation is not accepted then it presupposes that when the prophets did speak under "full inspiration" as it were they would have understood perfectly that which was being revealed to them; which is clearly not the case. Furthermore, if Hooker was convinced that some parts of the sacred text were not inspired then surely it would have been one of the key endeavours of his theology to isolate those parts of Scripture which really are the "Word of God" from those which are not. And yet Hooker never embarks upon this otherwise crucial investigation. The other set of passages that Grislis cites are those in which he only partially quotes 2 Tim. 3.16 ("All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness"). According to Grislis Hooker only ever quotes the second half of 2 Tim. 3.16 without referring to the first half ("all scripture is inspired by God") and this shows that Hooker held to a "distinction between uninspired and inspired scripture" (Grislis, *op. cit.*, p.191). There are two comments to make. Firstly in *Lawes* 5.22.10, 2, p.99, where Hooker only refers to the second half of 2 Tim. 3.16 Grislis is basing his argument on silence and all that that reveals is that Hooker chose not to quote the full text; it reveals nothing about Hooker's attitude towards the first half of the text. Secondly in *Lawes* 2.1.4, 1, p.147 Grislis is mistaken for Hooker does refer to 2 Tim 3.16 in its entirety simply to make the point that all scripture is inspired in order to make men perfect unto good works meaning by that "workes, which belong unto us as we are men of God, and which unto salvation are necessary." Hooker was not hesitant to quote the whole of 2 Tim 3.16 when it suited his purpose and he could quote it in its entirety because it was, in point of fact, his own position.

The second argument that Grislis employs is that Hooker makes a distinction between "central and peripheral ideas in Scripture" and the central "idea" is Christ. But this does not mean that some parts of Scripture are not inspired. All it demonstrates is that within the whole of inspired Scripture there are central and peripheral ideas. The acknowledgement of this fact in no way lessens Hooker's claim to the full inspiration of the biblical text.

57. *Ibid.*

58. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, 2.6.1, 1, pp.167-168.

59. For this debate between Hooker and the Puritans See "A Christian Letter", *Lawes: Attack and Response*, *op. cit.*, 4, pp.31-35.

60. Richard Hooker in his Marginal Notes to "A Christian Letter", *op. cit.*, p.31.
61. *Ibid*, p.32.
62. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 2.7.5, 1, p.180.
63. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 2.8.7, 1, p.191.
64. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 2.8.5, 1, p.189.
65. *Ibid*.
66. *Ibid*.
67. *Ibid*.
68. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 2.8.5, 1, p.190.
69. *Ibid*.
70. *Ibid*.
71. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 2.2.1, 1, p.148.
72. *Ibid*.
73. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 2.8.6, 1, p.190.
74. *Ibid*.
75. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 3.8.12, 1, p.230.
76. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 2.8.3, 1, p.188.
77. Peter Lake, however, comes very close to denying this. After analysing Hooker's treatment of the differing hierarchies of law in Book One Lake (correctly) concludes that Hooker is able "to picture the whole creation straining towards union with God" and in man this union with God is made possible through a "natural route...through the discovery of, and obedience to, the laws inherent in...nature." These, Lake maintains following Hooker, were "the terms on which salvation had first been offered to Adam." Furthermore Lake points out (correctly) that because of sin salvation has been rendered unattainable on these terms so God had to reveal it extraordinarily through special revelation. Having said this however Lake goes on (incorrectly) to depict Hooker's view of the fall as almost inconsequential so that his earlier vision of "cosmic order and the hierarchies of laws, ends and desires which led man naturally toward union with God...still meant that salvation was...natural to man." By such means Lake not only tries to eradicate any theological continuity that might exist between

Hooker and the mainstream Reformation he also seems to imply that "union with God" is still possible following a purely natural theology. See Peter Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?*, *op. cit.*, pp.148-151.

78. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 2.8.5, 1, p.189.
79. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 2.8.7, 1, p.189-190.
80. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 2.8.7, 1, p.191-2.
81. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 1.14.4, 1, p.128.
82. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 5.21.3, 2, p.84.
83. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 3.5.1, 1, p.215.
84. *Ibid.*
85. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 5.59.2, 2, p.252. Egil Grislis in his essay "The Hermeneutical Problem in Richard Hooker" deals with Hooker's treatment of John 3.5 and I am much indebted to Grislis at this point. See the essay in *Studies in Richard Hooker, op. cit.*, p.196-197.
86. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, ibid.*
87. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 5.59.4, 2, p.253.
88. *Ibid.*
89. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, Preface.8.7, 1, p.44.
90. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 2.4.2, 1, p.153.
91. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 2.7.1, 1, p.175.
92. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 3.8.14, 1, p.231.
93. Article 20 of the Church of England's Articles of Religion is headed "Of the Authority of the Church." It claims that "although the Church be a witness and keeper of holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree anything against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation."
94. Richard Hooker, *Lawes, op. cit.*, 3.8.14, 1, p.231.
95. William Whitaker, *Disputation on Holy Scripture*, cited in P.E. Hughes, *Theology of the English Reformers*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1980, p.34. Interestingly A.S. McGrade refers to Whitaker as "a strict and learned Calvinist" and points out that Hooker refers to Whitaker's *Disputatio*

*de sacra scriptura contra R. Bellarminum et T. Stapletonum* in 1.14.5, 1, p.129 of the *Lawes*. Despite being stoutly protestant Hooker has no difficulty in referring to Whitaker and his work as "ours" and he quotes him approvingly against the Puritans. See R. Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, ed., A.S. McGrade, *op. cit.*, p.240.

96. See "Hooker's Autograph Notes" in "A Christian Letter", *op. cit.*, 4, p.14.

97. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, 3.8.15, 1, p.232. Cf. *Lawes op. cit.*, 3.8.18, 1, p.234-235.

98. Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, *op. cit.*, p.3. Althaus writes, "All Luther's theological thinking presupposes the authority of Scripture. His theology is nothing more than an attempt to interpret the Scripture."

99. This is pointed out by P. Althaus, *op. cit.*, p.75.

100. Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, Concordia, Saint Louis, 26, p.58, cited in Althaus, *op. cit.*, p.75.

101. James Atkinson, *Martin Luther Prophet to the Church Catholic*, The Paternoster Press, Exeter, Devon, 1983, p.143.

102. Martin Luther, "Avoiding the Doctrines of Men", *Luther's Works*, *op. cit.*, 35, p.132.

103. Martin Luther, "Prefaces to the Old Testament", *Luther's Works*, *op. cit.*, 35, p.247.

104. Martin Luther, "Prefaces to the Old Testament", *op. cit.*, p.237.

105. Martin Luther, "Prefaces to the Old Testament", *op. cit.*, p.241. Luther writes, "[Moses] has to wear the people down, until his insistence makes them not only recognise their illness and their dislike for God's law, but also long for grace."

106. This is evidenced, for example, by Luther's view of inspiration. Luther wrote that "God is in every syllable of the Bible", "no iota is in vain" and "one should tremble before a letter of the Bible more than before the whole world." Cited in R.H. Bainton, "The bible in the Reformation", *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, ed. S.L. Greenslade, Cambridge University Press, 1963, p.12.

107. P. Avis in "Moses and the Magistrate", *op. cit.*, p.152, writes, "In Luther we have the only absolutely uncompromising repudiation of the Mosaic judicial law among the continental Reformers."

108. Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, *op. cit.*, 47, p.78. Cited in P. Avis, "Moses and the Magistrate", *op. cit.*, p.153.

109. Martin Luther, "How Christians should regard Moses", *Luther's Work*, *op. cit.*, 35, p.169.
110. Martin Luther, "How Christians should regard Moses", *op. cit.*, p.170.
111. Martin Luther, "How Christians should regard Moses", *op. cit.*, p.171. Luther's understanding of the different meanings that can be attributed to "word" is a complex study. J.D. Trigg touches on this issue in *Baptism in the Theology of Martin Luther*, *op. cit.*, pp.69-71. Cf. also P. Avis, *The Church in the Theology of the Reformers*, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-94.
112. *Ibid.*
113. Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, *op. cit.*, 40, p.92. Cited in Avis, "Moses and the Magistrate", *op. cit.*, p.152.
114. Martin Luther, cited in Avis, "Moses and the Magistrate", *op. cit.*, p. 152. Avis, in turn, cites the quotation from H. Bornkamm, *Luther and the Old Testament*, Eng. Trans., Philadelphia, 1969, p.135.
115. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, 1.14.4, 1, p.128.
116. Paul Avis, "Moses and the Magistrate", *op. cit.*, p. 163.
117. John Calvin, *Institutes*, *op. cit.*, 1, p.209.
118. John Calvin, *Institutes*, *op. cit.*, 2.6.1, 1, p.293.
119. *Ibid.*
120. For a full discussion of this aspect of Calvin's theology see T.H.L. Parker, *Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries*, T. & T. Clark Ltd., Edinburgh, 1986, pp.42-69 and Francois Wendel, *Calvin*, Wm. Collins and Sons Ltd, Glasgow, pp.196-214. I am indebted to both Parker and Wendel.
121. John Calvin, *Institutes*, *op. cit.*, 2.7.2, 1, p.301.
122. John Calvin, *Institutes*, *op. cit.*, 2.10.2, 1, p.370.
123. *Ibid.*
124. John Calvin, *Institutes*, *op. cit.*, 2.11.1, 1, p.388.
125. John Calvin, *Institutes*, *op. cit.*, 2.11.2, 1, p.389.
126. John Calvin, *Institutes*, *op. cit.*, 2.11.4, 1, p.390.
127. John Calvin, *Institutes*, *op. cit.*, 2.11.7, 1, p.393.

128. John Calvin, *Institutes*, *op. cit.*, 2.11.12, 1, p.397.
129. John Calvin, *Institutes*, *op. cit.*, 4.20.16, 2, p.665.
130. John Calvin, *Institutes*, *op. cit.*, 2.7.1, 1, p.300.
131. John Whitgift, *Works*, *op. cit.*, 3, p.576.
132. John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries*, ed. D.W. and T.F. Torrance, Edinburgh, 1959-, i.209; cited in P. Avis, "Moses and the Magistrate", *op. cit.*, p.164.
133. John Calvin, *Institutes*, *op. cit.*, 4.20.14, 16, 2, pp.663 & 665; cited in P. Avis, "Moses and the Magistrate", *op. cit.*, p.164.
134. John Calvin, *Institutes*, *op. cit.*, 4.8.9, 2, p.395.
135. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, 1.14.4, 1, p.128.
136. Richard Hooker, *Lawes*, *op. cit.*, 5.59.2, 2, p.252.
137. The Preface to the Ordinal in the Book of Common Prayer concentrates on this aspect of the historic ministry. It states that "it is evident unto all men diligently reading holy Scripture and Ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.....And therefore, to the intent that these Orders may be continued, and reverently used and esteemed, in the Church of England; no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon in the Church of England, or suffered to execute any of the said Functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the Form hereafter following, or hath formerly Episcopal Consecration, or Ordination."
138. W.P. Haugeard, *op. cit.*, p.165. Haugeard's thesis is a useful one to use in this context. He attempts to use Hooker's sense of Reason, Tradition and Scripture to build a synthesis novel to Hooker and Anglicanism.
139. W.P. Haugeard, *op. cit.*, p.166.
140. W.P. Haugeard, *op. cit.*, p.167.
141. *Ibid.*
142. W.P. Haugeard, *op. cit.*, p.168.
143. *Ibid.*
144. *Ibid.*

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