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THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE
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ABSTRACT.

The thesis is an attempt to provide a more comprehensive account of the context and character of Hooker's argument in the Ecclesiastical Polity than has hitherto been presented.

The preface outlines the problems involved in such an examination. Part One includes both a short examination of how distinctive attitudes to change colour political argument(chapter one) and an account of Hooker's own response to a radical attitude to change(chapter two).Part Two provides a very compressed narrative of the progress of reformed religion in England(chapter three) and of Hooker's composition of the Ecclesiastical Polity(chapter four). Part Three endeavours both to examine the nature of Calvinist thought(chapter five) and to describe Hooker's reaction to the movement itself(chapter six).Part Four investigates Hooker's pre-suppositions about God and His Intelligible Universe(chapter seven), Reason and Conduct(chapter eight), and Natural Law and Political Society(chapter nine).Chapter ten(Metaphor and Practical Argument) represents an attempt both to extend and to summarize my account of the character of Hooker's thought.

Part Five opens with a general investigation of the place of authority and tradition in the area of what Hooker's terms 'things indifferent.'This is illustrated more particularly in the Interpretation of Scripture(chapter twelve), in the public worship of the Christian community(chapters thirteen,fourteen and fifteen), and in regard to the 'power of dominion' in Commonwealth and Church. (chapters sixteen andseventeen).The conclusion endeavours to draw together the various strands of Hooker's argument and to make a final comment on the nature of this argument.

THE POLITICAL THOUGHT
OF
RICHARD HOOKER:
AUTHORITY, EXPERIENCE AND ORDER.
BY
JOHN MICKLEWRIGHT.

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CONTENTS

Preface.

PART I: INTRODUCTION

1. Change and Disposition. 2.
2. Hooker and the Radical Disposition. 6.

PART II: THE OCCASION

3. Reformed Religion in England. 14.
4. Richard Hooker and the Ecclesiastical Polity. 26.

PART III: CHALLENGE AND REPLY

5. Reformed Religion: Discipline out of the Word. 32.
6. Hooker's Characterization of the Reforming 'Cause'. 50.

PART IV: METAPHOR AND REALITY

7. God and His Intelligible Universe. 63.
8. Reason and Conduct. 86.
9. Natural Law and Political Society. 103.
10. Metaphor and Practical Argument. 124.

PART V: NATURE, TRADITION AND AUTHORITY

11. Experience, Authority and ^{ORDER}~~Identity~~. 146.
12. Authority and the Interpretation of Scripture. 171.
13. The Character of the Church in Time. 187.
14. Ecclesiastical Arrangements and Principles of Judgement. 201.
15. The Christian Community of England: a Paradigm Case. 217.
16. Authority in the English Commonwealth. 236.
17. Authority in the English Church. 260.

Conclusion. 281.

Bibliography.

PREFACE

The launching of a book is an event in the world, but in time the book may surface in strange circumstances, encrusted with meanings foreign to its author's original intention. Therefore, since a book may be written which is intended not merely to offer a 'thought' but to persuade an audience to act on the expressed opinions, it is necessary to an understanding of this prescription to restore it to its original setting in human activity. For in books of a practical character 'words are part of action and they are equivalents to actions'.¹

This introduces us to what may be termed the historical dimension in the study of political thought. The aim in a historical appreciation is to restore to a work the author's own meaning as one might restore a water-mill to its original condition to show how, creakingly but unmistakably, the wheel turned when new.² In short, the attempt is to retrieve something from 'the erosion of immediate intelligibility' occasioned by the passage of time.³ But just as in restoring a mill to its original condition one may find that the original plans were inadequate and the finished product does not operate as intended, so it is necessary in the history of ideas to show that the intelligibility of a work is not as transparent as

1. Bronislaw Malinowski, Coral Gardens and their Magic, London, 1935, vol.2, p.9.
2. An analogy that has its origins in J. M. Dunn, The Political Thought of John Locke, Cambridge, 1969, p.x. I have altered it slightly and extended its use as the following remarks show.
3. The phrase is R. J. McShea's. See his The Political Philosophy of Spinoza, New York, 1968, p.vi.

originally thought and that its intellectual foundations are not as solid as once presumed. In sum, many arguments do not, indeed cannot, do what they pretend to do, and in attempting such operations prove themselves incoherent. And it is proper in any intellectual enterprise to uncover incoherent argument.

In this regard, the structure of the Ecclesiastical Polity has not, to my mind, received adequate attention. It is true that there are a few general studies available but these would seem to be mainly the work of theologians in search of a pedigree. This is a perfectly proper purpose on their part, but it is not mine. It is the identifying mark of such studies to seek in the past support for opinions that are still, in the present, regarded as useful and valuable.¹ In the process, the intentions of the author, in whose works these opinions have been located, and the structure of his argument, are steadily lost sight of. To recover these intentions as far as possible and to examine as adequately as I can the structure of the argument is my own aim in taking up the work of Hooker.

My own purpose, then, is chiefly historical in character. I seek to identify as far as possible Hooker's contemporary meaning. This involves the judgement, in my estimation, that Hooker is not a philosopher who qua philosopher has much of interest to convey to us today. It will be seen that in the main Hooker expounds his own compound of theological - cum -

1. In the Preface to E. T. Davies The Political Ideas of Richard Hooker, London, 1946, the then Dean of Wells was of the opinion that 'the working of a mind as massive and logical as was Hooker's must always be of interest and real value. The study of it would, I think, prove especially beneficial to a generation whose standards seem to be unduly and increasingly indebted to those set by Hollywood.'

philosophical views that are a reflection of the Great Chain of Being tradition. But his thinking, while it cannot be claimed as a new departure, is not a borrowed or stolen cloak worn to hide sterility of mind. He was working within a certain tradition, and here he was in complete control of its assumptions and precepts. He did not, however, examine these assumptions critically, and it seems that many of his modern commentators have not endeavoured to do so either.

This is not to imply, as is so often the fashion today, that the uniquely philosophical method of studying a thinker is to consider only the intrinsic cogency of his arguments. Belonging to a tradition seems too loose an adjustment in a person's thought to be susceptible of philosophical interpretation. But to regard a theorist's intentions and his relationship to his predecessors as a matter of extraneous influences on his work is dangerously misleading. With a thinker of Hooker's calibre it is an utter waste of time to study him for intrinsic philosophical merit alone. He has very little. This should not, of course, lead us to the conclusion that Hooker considered that his arguments had no philosophical cogency. He thought that they had, but this cogency is for him determined entirely by the tradition of thought in which he worked and which he regarded as authoritative. Such an attitude determines the intellectual content of his work.

The cogency of Hooker's general arguments, since they are offered as philosophical, must be investigated. This, however, is only a part of my enterprise. Much more important for Hooker was the supposed usefulness of these arguments in

the situation with which he was faced. He was, in short, concerned chiefly with practice, or at least with the influence of certain beliefs on practical activity. He tends to be impatient with theoretical problems which he finds confusing to his purpose. But his disregarding them does not necessarily strip him for effective action. Incoherence in argument at any level of experience can be an incumbrance.

The distinction that Hooker draws between necessity and indifference marks the point at which his thinking moves from one level to another. To be fair to Hooker, this distinction between necessity and indifference is something of a differentiation between theory and practice, but it cannot be considered adequate as a philosophical distinction. The reason why it cannot be held to be adequate is that the necessary principles that govern the conduct of man not only attempt to explain but also to prescribe the authorised ends of his activity. The distinction between necessity and indifference is really little more than one of ends and means. Clearly, Hooker is mainly concerned with practical application, and the very character of necessity allows for its direct relevance to practice.

I have ascribed to Hooker's aims and arguments a practical character. By this I mean that his project arose out of a particular situation, and for the most part Hooker had this situation in mind throughout the work. Such were the ideals and dispositions that generated this situation that Hooker

felt compelled to outline the general nature of his own position. In the later books he did of course attempt to examine in some detail the particular structure of the Elizabethan Ecclesiastical Polity, and he naturally found it to be perfectly reasonable. My immediate concern is not, however, with his examination of Elizabethan Church practice in these books, but with what Hooker considers to be the presuppositions of his entire project. In my view he assesses the situation according to two distinct sets of principles although in his own mind they were perfectly integrated.¹ What the immediate object of my attention is now is the particular point of view he sets forth in Book One of the Ecclesiastical Polity. For the arguments employed there to substantiate his position are circular in character. And this circularity characterizes his opponents' position likewise. In short, their arguments, which I term practical since they are primarily meant to have effect in practice, are particular (and peculiar) forms of practical argument. I shall term them systematically misleading practical argument.² By this I do not wish to signify that such arguments need be conscious and deliberate tricks. They are, however, illusory in that such arguments cannot have the authority they are proclaimed to have.³ They are, for instance, claimed as absolutely true and they cannot, because of their circularity,

1. The two sets of principles are those set forth in Book One where he outlines his absolute presuppositions about the nature of experience, and at the beginning of Book Five, where he proposes four principles by which in general the activities within the area of things indifferent may be judged.
2. An adaptation of Ryle's 'Systematically Misleading Expressions' Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, vol. XXXII, 1931.
3. John Grote writes: 'By "illusion" as distinguished from reality we mean what, given us as apparent fact by one sensitive power, will not stand the test of others'. Exploratio Philosophica, 2 vols., Cambridge, 1900, vol.1, p.13.

be falsified in time, for the time of their fulfilment is always ahead of ~~present~~^{present} practice. Yet they are practical in intent for what they proclaim is to be pursued in practice.

But practical argument is always subject to the contingent. The vocabulary employed to recommend what is to be done does not, it is true, change as rapidly as the situation (the result would be madness), but the situation itself has in it elements of uncertainty always. It is ever contingent, for the sufficient conditions necessary to control such a situation cannot be present in practice. That is why judgement is necessary, and even this is no guarantee of success. Decisions are always, from an ideal point of vision, taken on inadequate information. To have all the conditions necessary to bring about a situation is to be in that situation. And in such a state no act of a purposive nature, as we know it now, is possible. For to be in that state is to be in an essentially unchangeable and ideal situation. Thus those who propose an ideal condition and support it by circular argument often mistake the necessary conditions of practical activity. They expect that practice will in the end conform exactly to their ideal. Such a result would mean the extinction of historical time.

Although ideals of this nature are practical in that they offer a vision of perfect order which must be sought, they cannot in principle be contradicted by the presuppositions of all practical argument and activity. And practical argument and action, if it is to attain success in any degree, must be geared to as specific a time and place as possible.¹ Although

1. The criteria for purposive action are success and satisfactoriness. Argument in practice revolves around attempts to bring about more satisfactory circumstances. And such argument, therefore, must take into account the particular order of the present, and how and when at a particular time in the future such a more satisfactory situation might be brought

misleading practical arguments are in principle not subject to one particular time and place (in that sense they are trans-historical) they are nonetheless, despite their formal structure, to be judged according to the criteria of practical argument. The point about a circular argument in practice is that it can only be punctured on the nail bed of time. Of course the argument has, so to speak, to be put in motion first. And some such arguments are deflated at birth by time's indifference. However, so long as a number of people believe such arguments, that is, take them at their own estimation, then these arguments may be said to have 'caught on'. From our point of view their ideal ends cannot logically be reached, for they contradict what we may term the presuppositions of practice. But such an argument in practice merely bounces off the protective skin of any circular argument.

The Calvinist argument, for instance, partakes of this circular character. For in this tradition of thought the elect see the world in like fashion and for them the truth is what they see. By definition those who refuse to acknowledge the truth as they see it are not of the elect. Hooker's own argument is somewhat similar in its circularity, but only in part. He has an escape clause with his distinction between necessity and indifference, and in practice this is serviceable enough. However, this characterization of the two arguments will, I hope, become somewhat clearer as we proceed.

The cogency of Hooker's argument and the character of the tradition in which he worked naturally form the centre of my

about. For some discussion of practical reasoning see A. Kenny, 'Practical Inference', Analysis, vol.26, 1965-66, pp.65-75.

work. Associated with this argument are the vocabulary and literary devices used to 'clothe' its structure. And here it might be noted that this study is an illustration of, and perhaps a corrective to, Professor Greenleaf's general work on two traditions of political thought.¹ What we have in the present study with greater detail and, I hope, with enhanced understanding, is an examination of one thinker employing such ideas as ordered correspondences between hierarchies of sub-groups throughout nature. Greenleaf appears in his study of the ideas of order and empiricism to assert a correspondence of his own, which the book does not substantiate. For in illustrating the political implications as he sees them of the idea of order, he makes use of theorists of royal absolutism only, and in examining the political ideas of the empiricists, he finds them to be anti-royalist and always anti-absolutist.²

This I believe to be misleading. Even within his own book the dichotomy which he propounds can be seen to collapse. For the thinkers that Greenleaf employs to illustrate his theme just did not view matters as he claims they did. Far from conceiving the universe to be either a created or a natural order, they saw it as being both simultaneously. What reason suggested observation confirmed. In such a reciprocal

1. W. H. Greenleaf, Order, Empiricism and Politics, ^{London} ~~Oxford~~ 1964.
2. Greenleaf, ibid, pp. 8. 'I first explain the world-view of order which was fundamentally based on a Christian-inspired metaphysic and the arguments of which were characteristically elaborated by the process of analogy called "correspondence". In England this style of thought tended politically to be associated with the idea of absolute sovereignty. It thus provided a philosophical basis for the doctrine of the divine right of kings.' (My underlining.)

relationship scientific observation did not contradict what God had revealed. One of the greatest achievements of the eighteenth century and perhaps the most 'empirical' of all, namely the classification of animals and plants by Buffon and Linnaeus, rested on an acceptance of the great chain of being.¹ And Petty, who appears as an empiricist in Greenleaf's work, composed some notes on the 'scale of creatures'.² It thus seems to be a common feature of human thought that particular experiences are often accommodated to principles and values apparently external to them.

Greenleaf's dichotomy is, then, incoherent and so indeed is his correspondence between political opinion and a comprehensive vision of human experience. Hooker with his idea of order is no less clear on Parliament's proper place in the political arrangements of the English Commonwealth than Bacon, the empiricist, is. Coke, who frequently has recourse to the vocabulary of the idea of order in his Reports, stands far more for the rights of the subject embodied in the rule of law than Bacon. Indeed, these examples point to a peculiar problem in the study of political thought, namely the relationship between an all-embracing vision of reality, which may often be expressed in a metaphorical or mythical form, and political experience itself. And it is to this problem that for the moment we turn.

The relationship that exists between political activity and the disposition that propels and is an aspect of that activity,

1. Natural theology as a context for political and scientific thinking survived well into the nineteenth century. See, for instance, R. M. Young, Malthus and the Evolutionists: The Common Context of Biological and Social Theory, 'Past and Present', no. 43, 1969.
2. The Petty Papers, ed. by the Marquis of Lansdowne, 2 vols., London, 1927; vol. II, pp.21-35.

and a comprehensive doctrine which purports to explain or describe what in general is happening, is certainly problematic. It is clearly not deductive in any precise sense of that term. The particulars of actual experience and their significance are not logically deducible from a comprehensive doctrine even if the believer may consider such an operation to be possible in principle. It is commonly thought that the appropriateness of a particular action can be tested against the general tenets of the view held. But this, of course, depends upon the previous acceptability of the 'explanation' offered. And indeed much may be accommodated within a very general frame of reference. Such a process is circular, not deductive.

Much of what Collingwood has written about absolute pre-suppositions might fruitfully be applied here. As Collingwood explains them, the general and comprehensive principles of any mode of experience are not 'major premises' nor 'universal propositions' from which the specific and particular statements that men utter are to be inferred deductively. Rather, the specific statements and questions of any activity depend in part for their meaning and relevance on general doctrines. As Collingwood has it, the specific propositions either 'arise' or 'do not arise', depending upon the general principles assumed; and the general doctrines are related to them, not as axioms to entailed propositions (as is often thought to be the case in theory), but rather as 'presuppositions' to consequential questions or indeed actions.¹ The relevance and acceptability

1. R. G. Collingwood, An Essay on Metaphysics, Oxford, 1940; part one, passim.

of narrower concepts or principles is thus referred to - and made contingent upon - the relevance and acceptability of broader concepts; and in any activity the most general pre-suppositions of all partly determine the basic concepts and patterns of thought employed in their interpretation of that particular area of thought.

Now in the effort to make experience intelligible many 'world views' often have recourse to metaphors and analogies. Such analogies and metaphors are often drawn from other areas of experience and then applied to political experience. Much prescriptive thought employs this type of imagery because it is held that it can relate what is strange to what is familiar, what is new to what is old. In such a fashion it endeavours to make the world more determinate. The effort extends to describing what is happening and to 'explaining' why it ought or ought not to have happened. It is a necessary corollary that it also prescribes what one should do in the future. How effectively this may be done does perhaps depend on the concreteness of the opinions involved. However, effectiveness in prescribing particular actions in the immediate future is not the only criterion (one wonders how far it is a criterion) in the continued existence of a particular way of explaining or describing reality. The strength and success of a particular view of reality is a reflection of its 'persuasiveness', and this is as much (if not more so) dependent on disposition and circumstance as effectiveness in prescribing in particular cases.

Metaphors and analogies, then, are reflections of an attempt to provide useful 'persuasive' tools, both for ourselves and for others. It must be noted, however, that if the metaphors are taken as complete, that is if the metaphor is held

to be real¹, then there is no political debate, merely description and authoritative prescription.² On the other hand, one may illustrate or describe by the use of imagery, and yet be able to respond to a particular situation in a variety of ways. This is the case with Hooker. Numerous correspondences illustrating order are frequently drawn. Yet, although the extended metaphor of the Great Chain of Being offers a complete description of reality and allows such correspondences to be drawn, the distinction between necessity and indifference again gives enough latitude to stretch considerably (if not actually break³) the entire chain.

In simple outline, then, what is aimed at in this study is a more coherent and historically accurate account of what Hooker was maintaining in the Ecclesiastical Polity than has yet been presented.⁴ My purpose is to grasp as far as possible the structure and the application of Hooker's arguments throughout. I have endeavoured, however, not to confuse accomplishment and intention, and I have consequently noted any incoherence in Hooker's arguments at points where what he was maintaining was not internally consistent and yet not necessarily meaningless. The criterion of what Hooker is maintaining is necessarily

1. Such metaphors are also 'dead' and/or extended. For further explanation of these terms see chapter nine of this work.
2. One thinks particularly of Filmer's Patriarchia.
3. It cannot actually break for that would be self-defeating. It would represent a fissure in the constellation of absolute presuppositions.
4. There is, I consider, no completely adequate treatment of Hooker's thought. The best works (excluding articles) on Hooker are those by Peter Munz, The Place of Hooker in the History of Thought, London 1952, and the chapter in A. P. D'Entreves Medieval Contribution to Political Thought, Oxford 1939. I have not seen D'Entreves' Riccardo Hooker, Torino 1939, but I have consulted his Oxford D.Phil. thesis which is an examination of Hooker's thought.

historical. But the internal consistency of any argument that pretends to philosophy is always a matter of philosophical (non-historical) judgement.

The structure of the following study I have divided into five parts. Part One seeks to characterize the disposition of the disputants. Part Two provides the historical setting to the conflict between Hooker and his opponents. In it I have noted something of the progress of reformed religion in England and of the beginnings of a reaction to the 'movement'. Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity is seen as one (if not the most) extended work in this reaction to the Presbyterian movement.¹ Part Three endeavours both to examine the nature of Calvinist/Presbyterian thought and to describe Hooker's reaction to the movement itself. Part Four is an attempt to explain the character of Hooker's principles and arguments. This is chiefly an investigation of Book One of the Ecclesiastical Polity. Since, however, Hooker endeavours to elucidate these principles throughout the entire work, clarification of the argument presented in Book One is increased somewhat by statements made elsewhere. The principles that are outlined concern the nature of experience in general, and moral conduct and political activity in particular. I end this section with a general chapter in which I seek to summarize and extend my explanation of the nature of Hooker's thought. Part Five is an examination of how Hooker attempts to use these principles in countering the practical arguments of the Presbyterians and others. In it I hope to bring out the emphasis Hooker places on authority and tradition in the area of things indifferent. This is illustrated in three areas

1. It is, of course, the most famous.

of experience, namely, in the interpretation of Scripture, in the public worship of the Christian Community, and in relation to the 'power of dominion' in Church and Commonwealth.

Throughout this study we shall see Hooker employing his basic ideas of reason, revelation and experience, and his distinction between necessity and indifference. It is by way of these notions that he sought to validate many of the customs and institutions of Elizabethan England. And our understanding of how he attempted to do this is increased by noting the incoherencies in his arguments. It will be seen that practically anything may be accommodated within a metaphorical structure, of which the concept of natural law is a part. Indeed, we are ultimately forced to conclude that despite the formality of the argument much, if not all, depends upon the character and disposition of the disputants. And this is as one might expect in any activity of a practical response.¹

Hooker's own particular disposition is, therefore, our last reason for studying him. For the great strength of conservative opinion and political thought in England naturally raises the question of 'origins'. In this connection the name of Burke almost too readily springs to mind, for many of the basic assumptions of conservative thought are present there. These include, of course, the deep sense of tradition, the

1. This has certain implications for the study of political thought. See (i) J. G. A. Pocock, 'The History of Political Thought: a Methodological Enquiry', in Philosophy, Politics and Society 2nd Series, ed. P. Laslett and W. G. Runciman, Oxford (Blackwell) 1962; (ii) Q. Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', History and Theory vol. VIII 1969; (iii) J. M. Dunn 'The Identity of the History of Ideas' Philosophy, vol. XLIII, 1968

great distrust of 'radical' thought, and emphasis on the rule of law. But, without denying the specific contribution of Burke to the English conservative tradition, it would be historically inaccurate not to recognise that such things as a profound dislike of radical reform, a sense of community, and a great emphasis on law and tradition were not present in previous English thinkers. It will be, therefore, one of the purposes of this work to show the importance of the Ecclesiastical Polity for the English conservative tradition. 'For assuredly it is the work which, more perhaps than any in our language, embodies that conservatism.'¹ And the principle that English conservatism embodied was that of the rule of law as against private opinion.

1. F. D. Maurice, Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy, 2 vols. rev. ed., London 1872, pp. 190-192.

PART I

INTRODUCTION

1.

CHANGE AND DISPOSITION

Political thought is about order and achievement within the world. It is generally, I consider, a response to a change in the order or lack of order in immediate experience. Such situations may provide the occasion for thought of an abstract character to offer surrogates and substitutes for the apparent lack of certainty that is an inevitable consequence of change. Part of the air of certainty that pervades this type of thinking stems from its being quite abstract for all its wealth of detail. For the particulars stressed usually bear little relationship to the circumstances of their inception. It has been one (if not the) characteristic feature of political thought since the Reformation that it has been ready with blueprints to bring change to a halt in a regime of perfect order.¹ And this order is held to be theoretically viable before its practical creation, and its very perfection is a radical criticism of present arrangements. It is, accordingly, a sin to compromise merely by tinkering with this or that corrupt practice. To enjoy what is present without recognizing its depravity is, consequently, irrational and inhuman from the radical standpoint. The fundamentalist, finding that much is radically bad in present political society, calls for its transformation in the light of 'rational' principles and ideals. In this way he hopes that new societies, the blueprints for which are 'on the boards', will be created. His idea is that society should be consciously and deliberately re-fashioned

1. It is likewise a characteristic feature of this manner of thought, almost despite itself, to be slightly vague about details of its schema. This, of course, need be of little moment until the chosen commence to dispute among themselves over these very details.

according to preconceived ideas.¹

This fundamentalist disposition appears in practice for the first time in the sixteenth-century. Its origin, however, is not to be found in the purely political but is an attitude originally foreign to properly political experience. Radicalism, generally, is a disposition of thought that is brought to bear on the political from outside. (And this is no less true of the thought of Marx, Bentham and Paine, for instance, than it is of Calvinism.) The particular social conditions of the sixteenth century, therefore, provided the occasion for the widespread practical influence of this fundamentalist disposition which informed the Calvinist 'movement'. As Michael Walzer has it, the sixteenth century saw 'the appearance of revolutionary organization and radical ideology'.² The saints considered that revolution was at hand for they saw themselves as divine instruments, wreckers of a corrupt society and recreators of a godly community.

In what we may term traditional societies (that is, before the Industrial Revolution) the radical was a reactionary. Consequently, the effort at radical change took the form of an attempted recreation of a previous ideal state. This attitude had a long history but it had hardly been efficacious on a large scale. In the sixteenth century, however, it clearly had widespread repercussions. Of course the attempted changes

1. This fashionable trend in political thinking has so overcome one admirable academic that he has been led to conclude that 'theory has become the opium of the masses'. E. Kedourie, 'Revolutionary Nationalism in Asia and Africa', Government and Opposition, vol. 3, 1968, p. 464.
2. M. Walzer, The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics, New York, 1968, p. 1.

did not recreate the ideal state at all, but merely occasioned 'rapid ' change in a 'forward' direction. For action, whether the occasion for its inception is an ideal form found in the past or a goal to be reached in the future, always takes time. That is why, in practice, while it may be important to differentiate between the reactionary endeavouring to 'return' to an ideal arrangement and the 'modern' radical attempting to create his projected vision of a perfect future, this fundamentalist attitude common to both of them has a similar effect. They both act in the present to destroy that present order utterly and to create a perfect future or to bring about a return to a perfect past condition. This is logically impossible, and all that happens is change from one situation to another. Change may thus be considered 'slow' or 'rapid' according to one's disposition. Both reform and revolution as aspects of change are still endless processes. Change cannot come to a halt. Yet for all that, to the conservative the attempt at 'reform' may still get out of hand and change may appear too 'fast'. 'There hath arisen a sect in England which seeketh to reform even the French reformation.'¹

The radical attitude and response to change, then, the conservative in particular has found to be dangerous nonsense, both potentially and actually. For the conservative himself political activity requires considerable judgement, an appreciation of subtle gradations and distinctions, and a sense of timing and relevance. And these are the things that cannot be set out in definite rules and precepts. They are learned from actions and from trying to act, and from making use of present

1. R. Hooker, Eccl. Pol., IV, viii, 4.

materials. Radical argument, consequently, may be considered irrational in that 'rational' argument itself is based on long and deep experience and issues in a judgement about actual political arrangements. Such is the only proper response to change.

This clash between conservative and radical provides, in my view, something of a thread running through Post-Renaissance political thought, and especially English political thought. This clash of dispositions we may come across on numerous occasions. For instance, it may be seen in the disputes between various radical sects and the parliamentarians and the royalists in the Civil War, in the confrontation between Burke and Paine, in the arguments of Maine and Spencer, and in the extended writings of Bentham and Coleridge. Of course, the 'formal' content of many of the works of these authors are very different. But, if we pay attention to the way in which they make use of these contents, so to speak, we find, I consider, distinctive attitudes to change. And it is these attitudes that are of considerable importance in practical argument. They inform, if I am not mistaken, the tactics and style of many a dispute. This is the case between Hooker and his opponents.

2.

HOOKER AND THE RADICAL DISPOSITION

Hooker is one of the first to face up to the full implications of fundamentalism in practice. Such a disposition led him to examine his own attitude toward change and to concern himself with the various authorities, their place and extent, within a historical community. This is hardly surprising, for the sixteenth century saw considerable discussion of the modes of authority, their structure and transmission within the Christian Community. And in the period under consideration the state was 'so clearly linked with religion that no state that changed its religion ever survived in its old political form'.¹ The attempt by the Calvinists, therefore, to establish a 'true' church involved them willy-nilly with change in general, with political authority and the social order. For the sake of establishing a proper church, the dissolution of the old order was demanded and deemed necessary. This involved rearranging political and religious relationships in such a way that the church could be removed from that area of corruption that had, in effect, given it a history. For the true church had a timeless form, established by divine act. Its members were obliged to maintain its rigid identity over and against historical change.

The arguments employed to support such a contention will be examined more fully in the following chapters. Suffice it here to remark that they are, I consider, circular in character.

1. Lord Acton. Quoted without reference by H. Butterfield, Lord Acton, London, 1949, p. 6.

That is, they display the characteristic feature of what we have already referred to as systematically misleading practical argument.¹ Such argument is a persistent characteristic of a part of Hooker's thought. In the face of what he considered to be a radically subversive argument, Richard Hooker in Book One of his Ecclesiastical Polity reiterated a traditional view of experience designed to display the irrationality of his opponent's argument. This is the most general aspect of his purpose, which is to destroy, by argument, the Presbyterians' intellectual foundations. The ground is thereby cleared for a discussion of the particulars of present experience, not the details of an experience long since past. The discussion both of the necessary principles of reality and of its details, accordingly, proceeds to the end in view, namely the legitimisation of the Elizabethan Settlement. For all his air of intellectual objectivity Hooker has a practical end in mind, and his arguments are directed towards that end.

In his argument Hooker uses certain key words and endeavours to construct their relationship to each other. For at least fifteen hundred years several of the words he employs had provided the means by which the few, who were able, had exchanged political ideas at all levels of discourse higher than that of substantive law. Among such words were nature, experience, law, justice, custom, reason, virtue and order. The considerable stability of the intelligibility of these words in relation to each other, and the intricate symbiosis by which all sustained one another, had for centuries effectively guaranteed the general meaningfulness of political discourse, although they

1. See the Preface to this work.

did nothing to assure its practicality and immediate relevance despite vague assertions to the contrary. The balance, however, by which these words maintained their value was seriously disturbed for possibly the first time in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. This disturbance was a reflection both of intellectual dissatisfaction with certain aspects of scholastic tradition and later of the disintegration of the Church of Rome. It was, indeed, the Christian Humanists who first endeavoured to reform the Church and to remove what they considered to be intellectual and moral errors. What may be termed the high point of this 'school' was More's Utopia.¹ But, for an increasing number, the attempt to reform progressed too slowly, and the corruption of the Church felt increasingly unbearable. For this corruption was itself a sort of moral and spiritual disorder. The effort, therefore, to reform and to shake off the shackles of the Papacy by political and religious groupings was brought on by and, in turn, created disorder.

With the repudiation of the Roman Church and the disorder consequent thereupon, there emerged traditions of thought that offered ways out of the impasse. Mingling with these attempts to pursue religious reform and to attain unity were the politics of the 'secular' princes. The character and failures of their style of activity occasioned three 'secular' modes of thinking about politics.² They were the Machiavellian, with its emphasis

1. Thomas More, Utopia, ed. Edward Surtz, S. J. and J. H. Hexter, Yale Edition of the Complete Works of St. Thomas More vol. IV, New Haven, 1965. The introduction by Hexter is particularly good and sets Utopia within what he terms the Christian Humanist tradition.
2. By secular I mean that they were not immediately related to the Great Chain of Being.

on 'real' statesmanship¹, the Polybian or Venetian image of the immortally stable, mixed constitution which carried down to the end of the eighteenth century the Hellenic vision of political 'space'², and, in England at least, the idea of the Ancient Constitution³. These images of political order did not impinge particularly on Hooker's sphere of vision, although his thought has affinities to the tradition of the common lawyers and he did have some comments to make on Machiavelli and the 'atheists' at the beginning of Book Five. What did concern him greatly was, of course, the Calvinist vision with its notions of election and 'true church'. These ideas were part of a schema of universal history which envisaged a sequence of godly and anti-godly actions forming an eschatological 'myth'. The true church, consequently, was less a historical phenomenon than the institutionalization of the laws of redemption in time. This church was exclusive in that, if rigid and immutable standards of conduct were to be adhered to, any corrupting influences had to be removed and destroyed. Ideally, life was conducted in an orderly imitation of the sacred.⁴ Those who took part in this ritual were the saints, and in pursuit of their ends, ties of mutual confidence, sympathy and kinship

1. 'Real' means external and not 'moral'. For traditionally moral activity has its origin in internal intention. Real statesmanship was thus a rejection of the 'Mirror of Princes' genre and took as its measure political successive irrespective of 'moral' intention.
2. Z. S. Fink, The Classical Republicans, Evanston, 1945, and J. G. A. Pocock, 'Machiavelli, Harrington and English Political Ideologies in the Eighteenth Century', William and Mary Quarterly, vol. 22, 1965.
3. J. G. A. Pocock, The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law, Cambridge, 1957.
4. Underneath the argument something of the institutional continuity in Geneva may be seen in E. W. Monter, Calvin's Geneva, New York, 1967, and Studies in Genevan Government 1536-1605, Geneva 1964.

lost their value. Thus the expression of order and brotherhood was achieved by the spiritual communion of those who shared in the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper, by the exclusion from it of the unworthy and by the outward signs of saintliness and election. This alone constituted the true identity of the saints. The proof of divine justice,~~and~~ beneficence and wisdom lay in positive recognition, without ostensibly any interpolations of the facts asserted by Scripture. Moral righteousness became a matter of visible proofs within an eternal community.

In the face of this radical attitude towards change, and of the threat to the authority and identity of the traditional church in England (for its destruction is what the Presbyterian project amounted to), Hooker took up what he considered to be the proper framework of thought to answer such irrational and mistaken longings. He consciously accepted the traditional political vocabulary in its entirety, and sought to show its relevance to the matter at hand. He attempted to correct the fissure in the constellation of these words which the Calvinists had caused by changing their setting and reference. By so altering the setting of these words they were able to reject as irrelevant to ecclesiastical considerations the idea of traditional experience. But they were not Utopians in the sense that the perfect society or discipline existed merely in the imagination. For they considered that the true constitution had once existed and that the experience could, and should, be recreated.

Thus it was that within a traditional frame of thought Hooker came to examine particular details and laws, and much if not all of what he has to say is prescriptive in intention

and tone. For, in contrast to the huge Summa of Aquinas, Hooker was mainly concerned with a particular community and how it could be 'placed' in the traditional context he had outlined. Yet, while he endeavoured to do this, it must nonetheless be noted that, for Hooker, the community itself was founded on tradition and law, and on the sharing of certain common experiences, particular patterns of conduct, and mutual sympathy. Hooker's work, therefore, is perhaps a reflection of the new sophistication and awareness of the individuality and identity of the traditional community that may be discerned in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹

While he had great faith in the thought he subscribed to, Hooker was clearly afraid of the results of the radical attitudes to change. He certainly admitted 'the aptness of men's minds to accept and believe' the new doctrines.² Under pressure from this type of thinking we see a thinker subtly shifting his ground from reliance on merely natural law principles and arguments to an increasing emphasis on tradition and the value of historical transmission as a mode of action and knowledge. And in the emphasis which Hooker placed on the church as a traditional community, transmitting its interpretations or original revelation in ways which invested them chiefly with prescriptive and presumptive value, we may perhaps recognize not merely an appeal to tradition as a mode of authority sometimes preferable to 'charisma', but an intensified awareness of the traditional community which is often considered

1. This may be seen in the historical writings of the period. On this see P. Burke, The Renaissance Sense of the Past, London, 1969; F. J. Levy, Tudor Historical Thought, San Marino, 1967; F. S. Fussner, The Historical Revolution, London, 1962; J. G. A. Pocock, The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law, Cambridge, 1957.

2. Eccl. Pol., I, i, 1.

the ideal conservative response to this fundamentalist disposition of thought. This aspect of Hooker's thinking is but a reflection of the importance ascribed to historical experience that provides the counterpoint to the political thought of post-Renaissance radicalism. In this conservative style of thought, political order and historical change are no longer necessarily in conflict with each other, but are bound up in a concept of experience. Such a concept makes it possible to criticize and recombine the information which is carried down from the past until there emerges the image of a past differently ordered and yet linked to the present through lines of institutional transformation. In this way we come to possess images of institutions determinate in space and time.

On the whole, then, Hooker's thought was inspired not by 'philosophical' considerations but by practical interests. Clearly what concerned him was how effectively his ideas influenced the community in which he lived, as much as how completely he had captured and conformed to some abstract idea of the truth. It would be wrong, of course, to conclude from this that practical considerations were for Hooker not in some sense bound up with the 'truth'. For certainly he believed that the ideas outlined in Book One of the Ecclesiastical Polity were true, that is, they reflected God's reason. But it is equally clear that Hooker considered that these ideas embodied certain values in addition to explaining the nature of reality. On his terms it would have been peculiar if they did not.

PART II

THE OCCASION

3.

REFORMED RELIGION IN ENGLAND

(i).

The reform of the Church in England conducted by Henry VIII was a political act. In place of the Pope as head of this Church, he proclaimed himself. By this act, legal ties with the Papacy were abolished. 'This realm of England', runs the preamble to the Act in Restraint of Appeals of 1533, 'is an empire'. England was, therefore, free to determine her own ecclesiastical arrangements. And Henry endeavoured to combine this replacement of headship with a position of conservatism in regard to doctrine and ceremonial. He found this, as his reign proceeded, extremely difficult. In 1539, for instance, Parliament, at Henry's bidding, passed a Bill entitled 'An Act Abolishing Diversity in Opinions'.

This conservative position of Henry VIII's was, then, always in jeopardy. It was challenged, on the one side, by Protestants and, on the other, by those who sought a return to Rome. In general there was an increasing tendency for initiative to slip out of royal hands. After 1547 initiative towards change shifted to a group of subjects. Henceforward there was to be a constant struggle between the Crown, desperately attempting to retain religious uniformity under royal auspices, and a 'movement' of Protestants straining and pulling to reshape the 'national' religion according to their own strongly-held views.

Yet, when Mary Tudor became Queen of England in 1553, there was not a single great Protestant realm in Europe, only a few petty German and northern principalities whose rulers were all too likely to return to the Roman obedience if the

situation ceased to be, as it looked like doing, to their advantage. For better or worse, however, Protestantism of a radical character was still in existence in 1600. It did not collapse in the face of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. Nor was it entirely defeated in England despite the royal attempt to establish and maintain a 'conservative' or moderate Protestantism. And that it did not do so was unmistakably the result of the initiative of the followers of Calvin.

The Calvinists more than any other introduced an extreme fundamentalism in religious thought which spilled over into 'political' action. Thus in England, the mere existence of a centre of initiative and action independent of the Crown was grave enough. But after 1559 it was even more dangerous by reason of its 'radical' character. The old factionalism of the past had been personal, familial or dynastic in nature. This did not entirely disappear, but the cohesion of this new 'movement' was its radical or fundamentalist disposition. Commitment to abstract principles of belief which were intended to act as the springs of necessary action was novel in the sixteenth century. But it was, as many were to discover, extremely useful both in regard to religious experience itself and to 'political' activity.

(ii)

From out of the confusion occasioned by the early Reformation Calvinism, with its particular conception of order and authority, appeared to offer a complete resolution of consequent difficulties both political and religious. The impulse behind this desire for discipline was an endeavour to keep corruption in the world under control and thereby to ensure that the godly church was not contaminated by the diseases found in the natural order. For, since

they lived in a world which was the battlefield of God and Satan, those who sinned, those who surrendered to Satan, were courting a visitation of God's wrath. Virtue, to adapt a phrase of Josiah Royce's, consisted at the very least in holding the devil by his throat. Originally, perhaps, all the Protestant sects had been anxious to secure real freedom of scriptural interpretation. They had also paid lip service to the idea that the true church was a kingdom not of this world and that they ought not to make use of force for spiritual ends. But this proved to be a practically impossible position to hold in an imperfect world, and, in response to the chaos of the first half of the sixteenth century, the Calvinists were led to demand holy discipline, which they believed could only be provided by the allegedly Apostolic form of theocracy. And this saddle of discipline was readily borne by those to whom the ideas of struggle and godly warfare were ever the spurs. Thus holy discipline tended to replace traditional legal order, peace and tranquillity were held to be the outcome of final victory only. The end of the struggle was the establishment of the true form of church organization.

Inevitably, in contrast to the conservatism of the Elizabethan Church, the more extreme Protestants were disposed to demand freedom from traditional political control. This did not merely add up to a separation of Church and Commonwealth, it implied that the magistrate should be subsumed under the Church. In other words, the extreme Protestant argument led almost inevitably to theocracy. In place of the Papacy as the 'external' authority, its adherents put an inspired interpretation on scripture, an inspiration, as Hooker frequently pointed out, often adjusted exactly to their own most pressing needs. In reality, they could not afford to allow for freedom of scriptural

interpretation, for that would have resulted in anarchy again. And indeed, if one interpretation was admitted to be as good as another, there was no 'necessary' or absolute case against the traditional church (or churches) which to some extent was, after all, based also on an interpretation of the Scriptures.

To meet the desire for 'true' order, which allegedly the traditional church did not provide, and to realize the wish for the correct principles of organization, which obviously the bishops and theologians of the Church had missed or failed to transmit, the systematic formulation of the new doctrine in scriptural terms was undertaken. The result was, amongst many other works, Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion, his Commentaries, his Sermons, and the supposed practical application of the principles displayed in these works at Geneva. It was here that many of the Marian Exiles saw, dominant over a whole community, a system of doctrine and discipline which was apparently self-contained. It ruled not only men, women and children, and took control alike of public and private life, (thereby obliterating that distinction) but it also committed to an ecclesiastical court or consistory

'the care of all men's manner, powers of determining all kinds of ecclesiastical causes, and authority to convent, to control, to punish, as far as with ex-communication, whomsoever they should think worthy, none either small or great excepted'.¹

In many such men as Knox, the years of exile appear to have accentuated an already radical disposition. And the longer they remained on the continent, the more easily they took up the extreme position of the Church at Geneva. In many ways, because they had no opportunity to practise what they preached

1. Preface, ii, 4.

on a large scale, it is understandable that they tended to be more virulent in their language, and more forceful in their conclusions, than Calvin himself. Exile thus made them more doctrinaire in their fundamentalism. It added the bitterness of frustration. The more deprived of opportunity for action, the more frenzied they became in proclaiming the truth.¹

By 1558 Calvinism was in a position to become the dominant version of 'Reformed' religion², and it was the intention of the radical group of the exiles, who returned on the death of Mary, to impose the newly 'recovered' true Word of God upon England, and to reform her Church according to that Word. Geneva, however, was as repugnant to Elizabeth as Rome, and no matter how sincerely Calvin may, in certain of his works, have paid respect to the civil magistracy in its proper sphere, and no matter how generously he paid his respects to the godly princess of England, political authority in Geneva was subordinate to a higher authority. So it appeared to Elizabeth and to some of her advisers. They, consequently, accepted neither the Genevan nor the Roman solution to ecclesiastical organization. The civil power in England remained supreme, in no way directly subject to the control of the spiritual power. And while the new

1. The other group of exiles remained loyal to the Prayer Book and to the general organization of the Church as it had been elaborated by Cranmer. This group was composed of such men as Jewel, who supported Coxe in the defence of the Prayer Book at Frankfurt. For the Marian Exiles and their activities see C. H. Garrett, The Marian Exiles, Cambridge, 1938. This is a useful book but with certain large flaws. See the review by J. E. Neale in English Historical Review, vol. 54, 1938, pp. 501-504. Walzer has some interesting comments to make, The Revolution of the Saints, New York, 1968, pp. 92-113.
2. For a short but very perceptive sketch of its infiltration of European society in general see J. H. Hexter, 'Utopia and Geneva', in Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe, eds. T. K. Rabb and J. E. Seigel, Princeton, 1969.

English theology was Protestant it was not Calvinistic.¹

Once Elizabeth was on the throne many of her subjects considered that in her they had at least a semi-godly or potentially godly princess.² They thus obeyed. To the extreme radicals, however, the true Church was constituted, not merely by the Christians of whom it was composed, nor by the sincerity of their profession, but by the 'truthfulness' of the doctrine publicly preached and upheld by authority, and by the sincere administration and reception of the sacraments, safeguarded by the exercise of godly discipline. The Church of Rome itself was corrupt because the Papacy had perverted the doctrine, sacraments and discipline of the 'true' Church. It was thus no longer an effective Christian church. Where the essential marks or signs of the true church were to be found, the presence of any number of what the radicals termed 'cold statute protes-

1. For detailed histories of the Elizabethan Settlement see J. E. Neale, 'The Elizabethan Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity' English Historical Review, vol. 65, 1950, and W.P. Haugaard, Elizabeth and the English Reformation, Cambridge, 1968.
2. Millenarian views were not necessarily a threat to the Crown. In this regard the works of John Foxe were extremely important. For it was he who conditioned generations of English Protestants to a belief in the historic mission of their role to crush the Romist Anti-Christ. Deference to the godly-prince was a decisive aspect of this enterprise. Yet his Book of Martyrs merely offered comfort because the martyrs' sufferings were set within a chiliastic framework. Foxe encouraged men in the belief that they were living in the fifth age of history, the last age, when Christ and Anti-Christ resolved their struggle. In the face of this end a passive disposition was considered to be the most 'godly'. No wonder Foxe's book was one of the few chained books in Elizabethan churches. For an examination of these millenarian views see two important works: W. Haller, Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs' and the Elect Nation, London 1967, and W. H. Lamont, Godly Rule: Politics and Religion 1603-1660 London, 1969.

tants' could not invalidate the authority of that Church. For religion was a public duty, not a private vision, nor a voluntary profession alone. The Word was to be obeyed and obeyed universally. Consequently, when the radicals attacked the 'imperfections' of the Elizabethan religious settlement, it was not so much to request a toleration of their own opinions as to demand the imposition of true reformation by public authority. Their complaint was not that religion was made a matter of compulsion, but that the law failed to conform to the pure ideal that they had done their best to set forth.¹

(iii)

Tentative answers to the radical position were given from the beginning of the reign.² But the divisions were not clear cut, for many of the assumptions of the radicals were shared by many of their opponents, although the radical emphasis and conclusions were not necessarily acceptable.³ Both sides were

1. By far the best book on Elizabethan radical protestantism is P. Collinson's The Elizabethan Puritan Movement, London 1967.
2. For some indication of the whole spectrum of opinion see C. Cross, The Royal Supremacy in the Elizabethan Church, London, 1969, pp. 19-57.
3. One must, I suppose, refer to the dispute over the word 'Puritan' and indeed the word 'Anglicanism'. To my mind the best discussion is that by B. Hall, 'Puritanism: the Problem of Definition' in Studies in Church History, ed. G. J. Cuming, vol. II, London 1966, pp. 283-296. Hall draws a number of distinctions and stresses the non-usefulness of the word 'Puritan'. I have myself tried not to use the word and have drawn my own distinctions. In this regard I have steered a course between the extremes of C. H. and K. George, The Protestant Mind of the English Reformation, 1570-1640, Princeton, 1961, and J. F. H. New, Anglican and Puritan, London, 1964. The Georges see no significant differences between the divisions of English Protestantism. As can be gathered from his chosen title, New takes the opposite view. I take the view that there are differences although it is perhaps not helpful to use the labels Anglican and Puritan. Also of interest on the controversy is C. H. George, 'Puritanism as History and Historiography', Past and Present, vol. 41, 1968.

agreed that Scripture was the test of truth; that all of the Scriptures carried the same weight, the Pentateuch being no less inspired or inspiring than the Gospels; that the Bible was in no way ambiguous and could not contradict itself; that any difficulties could be resolved by conscience and that all 'good' consciences ~~must~~ agree. Nonetheless, defences of the Elizabethan church settlement were offered and the radicals were criticized on certain doctrinal points.

The problem revolved around the way the Scriptures were interpreted. The radicals claimed their authority from the fact that the truth was obvious and they recognized it. In contrast, representing the established church, John Jewel, while accepting the the absolute finality of scriptural authority, considered that the Scriptures were not as transparent in their meaning as the more extreme claimed.¹ His main concern was to provide an interpretative authority without accepting the solution either of the Papacy or of the opposite extreme of complete dependence upon the discipline of the Calvinists. While he accepted the premise that traditional interpretation was of great value, he rejected the conclusion that the Papacy was necessarily the rightful judge of tradition. Similarly, while he agreed with the Protestant view that divine 'inspiration' was necessary in interpretation, he held that this was not self-validating and must meet the test of general agreement. He endeavoured to find what he considered to be an

1. On Jewel see W. M. Southgate, John Jewel and the Problem of Doctrinal Authority, Harvard, 1962. This is a straightforward 'life and ideas' work. There is an edition of Jewel's Works, ed. John Ayre, 4 vols., Cambridge: Parker Society, 1845-1850.

'objective' authority whose meaning was demonstrable by reason. But as to how he considered such an authority to be demonstrable by reason hardly bears looking into.

In general, Jewel's faith in his authorities and the demonstrability of his scriptural interpretation by their aid was just as naive as the faith of the early reformers in the clarity of scriptural meaning. But his writings do constitute the first comprehensive attempt of Elizabeth's reign to validate the authority of the English Church, and to prove the catholicity of its doctrine. Jewel, it appears, was distrustful of rapid change and stressed the value of common law and of all things derivative from past usage and custom.¹ It would, however, be foolish to elevate the differences between the Elizabethan divines, at this stage, into full-scale theological disputes. It has even been remarked, by Elton for example, that the Elizabethan radical protestant 'movement' for the most part, directed its attention to subsidiary matters of ceremony and doctrine, except where matters of God's authority, man's depravity and the all-sufficiency of Scripture were concerned.² The suggestion has been made that the explicit content of the controversy in the Elizabethan Church was not theological, and in particular that Calvin's doctrines of grace and predestination went almost unchallenged, even by most of the bishops, until near the end of the sixteenth century.

This is to carry matters to their opposite extreme. As Dr. H. C. Parker has rightly remarked³, the label 'Calvinist'

1. This is well brought out in Part Two of Southgate's book.
2. See Chapter 7, p.69, n. I of this work.
3. H. C. Parker, Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge, Cambridge, 1958, pp. 323 - 390.

has often been used without proper discrimination (I hope that this does not apply to the present study), and it by no means accurately describes the doctrine of grace propounded in the Thirty Nine Articles, nor even its treatment in Whitgift's Lambeth Articles of 1595, which are invariably cited as proof of their author's Calvinist orthodoxy. For Whitgift, the doctrine of the Church of England was not based on the work of any one theologian, least of all Calvin. The radical protestant strategy had invariably been to appeal consistently to the example of Continental protestantism in support of their proposals to make the church in England a 'reformed' church.¹ Cartwright frankly admitted the influence that the continental reformed churches had on his views and, in his controversy with Whitgift he had asked

'Is a Reformation that is good in France not also good in England? Would the Discipline which is proposed for Scotland be detrimental for this kingdom here? Surely God hath set these examples before your eyes to encourage you to proceed to a complete and prompt Reformation'.²

Cartwright, who had been in exile during Mary's reign, turned naturally to Beza and Geneva for support.

It was in the dispute between Whitgift and Cartwright that theological differences became explicit, although no formal treatise was composed on either side. Ultimately, it becomes possible to distinguish Whitgift from Cartwright not only by referring to 'choices' of ecclesiastical arrangement but also to the presuppositions of their arguments. For Whitgift,

1. And not just to Calvin and Beza, and the example of Geneva. See R. D. Linder, 'Pierre Viret and the Sixteenth-Century English Protestants', Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte, vol. 58, 1967.
2. John Whitgift, The Works of John Whitgift, ed. John Ayre, 3 vols., Cambridge, 1851-53, vol. III, p. 314. These volumes contain some of Cartwright's writings that refer explicitly to the dispute with Whitgift.

man was a fallen yet rational creature to the extent that he could attain to 'natural' knowledge. To Cartwright, man appeared as thoroughly corrupt and wholly incompatible with God until he had become regenerate by joining a Reformed community. Whitgift distinguished, and related, grace and nature hierarchically, while the Presbyterians separate the two spheres, never, in their minds, to be joined again in a complementary fashion. Whitgift regarded the Church in time as a visible body, while Cartwright viewed the Church as a gathering of visible saints in a timeless, completely self-determining community. Yet these differences are, it may be recalled, not outlined explicitly in some formal composition but are ideas aired only in occasional writings.¹

Cartwright, possibly in all innocence, failed to see the political implications of his programme. Perhaps, however, he was merely being disingenuous, for he must surely have known what he propounded was politically dangerous from the opposition aroused by the Presbyterian movement. It was left to Whitgift and later to Hooker to draw their own conclusions both from the doctrine itself and from its attempted implementation. The disciplinarian Whitgift had occasion to show what he thought the practical implications were when, in 1583, he was chosen by Elizabeth to become Archbishop of Canterbury. He and the Queen agreed in seeing nothing but political disaster in the Presbyterian ambitions and organization. Whitgift's attack was thorough and prolonged, and in the end apparently successful. He er

1. Originally I included a long section on the whole of the Whitgift-Cartwright controversy. I have, however, decided to remove it since it was unduly long for what it was: a catalogue of differing opinions, and since it has, subsequently, been examined in a short article by J. F. M. New, 'The Whitgift-Cartwright Controversy', Archiv für Reformation-Geschichte, vol. 59, 1968.

ployed the High Commission to seek out non-conforming clergy, applying his articles of 1583 under the 'ex-officio oath' to compel conformity or to force expulsion.¹ And time brought several advantages to his struggle. With the outbreak of war with Spain the support which radical protestantism had enjoyed among the more moderate but uneasy laity began to decline. Thirty years of usage were conferring some authority and stability on the Church and the Prayer Book. The Presbyterians no longer had a monopoly in intellectual and pastoral distinction. And some of their most important sympathisers in Church and Council died between 1588-1590.² The violently abusive Marprelate Tracts of 1589 perhaps alienated more opinion than they attracted, and they gave Whitgift grounds for fresh vigour. It was during this period that Hooker began to write.

1. P. Collinson, The Elizabethan Puritan Movement, London, 1967, pp. 243 - 291.
2. Notably Leicester and Walsingham.

4.

RICHARD HOOKER AND THE ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY

Hooker, it would appear, came to owe much to the patronage of John Whitgift. He was not, however, Whitgift's candidate for the post that brought him to London for an extended period. It was only after Whitgift's candidate for the Mastership of the Temple had been officially rejected because of ill-health¹ that the Queen chose a second candidate recommended by Sandys, the Archbishop of York, whose son this candidate had tutored at Oxford.² Thus it was that on 17 March, 1584, Richard Hooker received letters patent appointing him Master of the Temple. He had been selected as master mainly because he considered the laws of England to be legitimate, whereas another possible candidate, Walter Travers, who was already the Reader of the Temple, considered some of its laws to be corrupt. Hooker himself was young enough never to have known any other ecclesiastical government than the episcopalian, (he was born in 1554), while Travers, once he had seen the Calvinist regime of Geneva, was convinced that Presbyterianism was the one church government that conformed to the letter and spirit of the Scriptures.

Since 1581 when he preached at St. Paul's Cross in London³, Hooker's opinions had been known to audiences other than those at Oxford. This sermon in fact had given immediate offence to many radical Protestants, for Hooker had opposed Calvin's belief in the unity and oneness of God's will. Hooker himself maintained

1. J. Keble (ed.) Works of Richard Hooker, Oxford, 1836, Introduction, p. 39.
2. J. Strype, The Life and Acts of John Whitgift, Oxford, 1822, 3 vols.: vol. 1, p. 346.
3. M. Maclure, The Paul's Cross Sermon 1534-1642, Toronto 1958,

that in God there are two wills - an antecedent and a consequent. One report gave his teaching thus:

'Predestination is not of absolute will of God, but conditional. The doings of the wicked are not of the Will of God positive, but only permissive. The reprobates are not rejected, but for the evil works which God did foresee they would commit'.¹

It would be too crude to consider that this reported judgement as well as other opinions that Hooker was to develop in the Ecclesiastical Polity were a mere reflection of Hooker's Oxford background. In reality very little is known of Hooker beyond the simplest biographical details before his controversy with Travers. Enough general evidence is, however, available to correct the familiar view of radical Cambridge and conservative Oxford.² The notion, therefore, that Hooker's thought is a straightforward reflection of his university education is not supported by the meagre evidence available. All that is certain is that up to 1584 Hooker had spent most of his life at the University of Oxford, and that, by the time of his dispute with Travers, many of the leading presuppositions of his thinking had sunk deep into his mind. Beyond that it is impossible to go, because of the lack of biographical material. But since Hooker's mind was in the main quite conventional in its furnishing (though more sophisticated and better arranged than most), this is perhaps no great loss. It would appear, however, that the detail of the later books does reveal the influence of his stay at the Temple. This would account for the general similarity between the legalism of the later books and some of

1. R. Bayne, The Fifth Book of Hooker's 'Ecclesiastical Polity' London, 1902, Introduction, p. xx.
2. P. Collinson, The Elizabethan Puritan Movement, London 1967, p. 129. M. H. Curtis, Oxford and Cambridge in Transition, 1558-1642, Oxford 1959, pp. 191-3. M. H. Curtis, 'Library Catalogues and Tudor Oxford and Cambridge', Studies in the Renaissance, vol. V, 1958, pp. 111-120.

the ideas of the common lawyers.

Soon after his appointment Hooker and Travers clashed. It would, however, be superfluous to enter into details of this dispute as they have recently been well analysed.¹ In general, Travers' objections to Hooker's beliefs stemmed from the familiar Presbyterian premises. Travers, for instance, condemned the justification of the corrupting teaching of the Roman Church on salvation by works. He objected, as others had done previously, to making predestination the conditional and not the absolute will of God. He found equally unsupportable Hooker's consideration that assurance can come by reason rather than by the Scriptures alone. These objections were outlined in various sermons contradicting those delivered by Hooker. In the end Travers was silenced by Whitgift.

While Travers and Hooker were at the Temple it is noticeable that the clash between them was purely about doctrine, the questions of Presbyterian ordination and discipline were directly as yet a matter of dispute. Yet the principle reason why Whitgift refused to have Travers restored to his post was not merely for his doctrinal opinions but also because of his lack of episcopal ordination. He was not licensed to preach in the English Church. Travers, however, contended on scriptural grounds that his ordination was a 'true' ordination, and it was, consequently, unreasonable to repeat it, especially in a corrupt ceremony. His ordination should allow him to preach in every country, for God's will is one. Whitgift, nonetheless, refused to be moved by such argument.

1. S. J. Knox, Walter Travers: Paragon of Elizabethan Puritanism, London, 1962, pp. 70-88.

Travers went on to make a direct supplication to the Council to which Hooker wrote his Answer.¹ Although Travers himself gave no written reply to this answer, Hooker had not seen the end of the controversy, for the supporters of Travers apparently remained in the Temple as a vocal group. Indeed, they are known to have persisted in the Temple for at least five years, since Hooker, in 1591, requested Whitgift to find for him some quiet country living, saying 'I am weary of the noise and oppositions of this place'.² He went on to remark that his contest with Travers had been the more unpleasant for him,

'because I believe him to be a good man; and that belief hath occasioned me to examine mine own conscience concerning his opinions; and to satisfy that, I have consulted the Scripture, and other laws both human and divine, whether the conscience of him and others of his judgements ought to be so far complied with as to alter our frame of Church government, our manner of God's worship, our praising and praying to Him, and our established ceremonies, as often as his and others' tender consciences shall require us; and, in this examination, I have not only satisfied myself, but have begun a treatise in which I intend a justification of the law of our Ecclesiastical Polity.'³

Hooker resigned the Mastership of the Temple in July 1591 when he was appointed to a country living in Wiltshire. But, if Hooker wished to leave the hurly-burly of the Temple, he did not go so far as to depart from the City of London altogether, for, as Professor Sisson has shown⁴, he was never resident in his new parish. He remained in the city at the house of his father-in-law. His reasons for staying in London were not known since he could probably have written what he had intended in his parish, (as in fact he was later to do when he was given

1. This is contained in Hooker, Works, vol. III.

2. J. Keble (ed.), Works, vol. I, Introduction, p. 85.

3. J. Keble (ed.), Works, vol. I, Introduction, p. 85.

4. C. J. Sisson, The Judicious Marriage of Mr. Hooker, Cambridge 1940, pp. 45-46.

a further appointment). It is now clear, therefore, that the Ecclesiastical Polity was not the enterprise of a pious scholar who had little or no knowledge of political activity. It was written for the most part in London itself, and here, Hooker could draw on the help and advice of friends. Two in particular are known. They are George Cranmer, and Edwin Sandys, son of the Archbishop of York, a trained lawyer and Member of Parliament. Their annotations to the Sixth Book still survive to show how actively they helped,¹ Moreover, in the Dedication to the Fifth Book, Hooker speaks of the 'long-continued and more than ordinary favour' he had enjoyed from the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift.² Indeed, Hooker's enterprise may be considered as a continuation of Whitgift's own occasional writings. The Ecclesiastical Polity was, consequently, no lone and secret venture. It was from the first favoured by Hooker's friends and supported by Whitgift who, together with the Queen, was the most vigilant enemy of the Presbyterians.

1. J. Keble (ed.), Works, vol. III, Appendix to Book IV. Sandys was to become an important politician in the reign of James I and to write a work on religion and politics in England. See T. K. Rabb, 'The Editions of Sir Edwin Sandys's "Relation of the State of Religion"', Huntingdon Library Quarterly, vol. XXVI, 1962-1963.
2. Eccl. Pol., Book V, Dedication.

PART III

CHALLENGE AND REPLY

5.

REFORMED RELIGION: DISCIPLINE OUT OF THE WORD¹

English radical protestant thought during Elizabeth's reign was generally Calvinist and fundamentalist in inspiration, and it is appropriate to examine the head-waters of the tradition of which English Presbyterianism was one of the lower reaches.² This style of thought may be seen, in its widest context, as part of the crisis of authority that the Reformation in the profoundest sense was. This crisis was brought about by a desire on the part of many members of Christendom for a form of Christianity that was original, and thereby 'truly' authoritative. By this they meant that the Word was to be interpreted in what was considered to be the correct fashion, and that proper emphasis should be placed on the individual's relationship to God. Truth was to be uncovered by casting off the corrupting complications of time, and by returning to the example so evidently displayed in the Scriptures. The main attacks of the early reformers, accordingly, were directed against ecclesiastical arrangements whose hierarchical principle and temporal entanglements had imposed a strongly political character on the life of the Church and against a mode of thought whose chief exponents were considered to be Aquinas and Aristotle.³

1. The phrase is Perry Miller's: Orthodoxy in Massachusetts, Gloucester, Mass., 1965 (first ed. 1933), chap. 2.
2. I am well aware, of course, that every interpretation of a tradition changes that tradition and may come to have distinctive features of its own. See chapter 3 of this work.
3. In Luther's opinion Aristotle was 'that buffoon who had misled the Church'. Quoted without reference in A. MacIntyre, A Short History of Ethics, London 1967, p. 122.

With regard to religious conduct the reformers advocated the most uncompromising and radical changes. But in politics as such it appears that they had little interest. Luther, for instance, emphatically rejected any hierarchical distinctions among Christian believers, for before God all men are equal. And to be before God is a matter of grace. Men are not saved by works, for none of the deeds of men are in any sense good. Purposive activity, impelled by the will, is an aspect of the total corruption of man's nature. Yet he concluded from this degeneration that a political and social hierarchy was natural and necessary. He condemned outright peasant revolt, and advocated the bloody massacre, by the princes of Germany, of peasant rebels against lawful authority. In short, Luther was more than willing to raise the most fundamental questions about all forms of religious authority, for it was the individual Christian and his relationship with God that was of supreme importance. But, even when he had a poor opinion of rulers and their motives, his interest in political institutions and conduct was little roused.

The political problem inadvertently bequeathed by Luther and exacerbated by the Anabaptists centered on a developing crisis in the concept of order and authority. The prolific and vocal criticism of the Papacy by many of the early reformers had actually amounted to a demand for the release of the individual Christian from a miasma of institutional arrangements and traditional controls which had hitherto governed his conduct and determined his identity. The Church had endeavoured to determine the conduct of its members through a concrete body of law, to bind them into some kind of unity through emotional as well as material commitments, and to guide the whole religious

experience through an ecclesiastical authority with the aid of the political powers. In other words, the Catholic Church provided a set of restraints and encouragements designed to mould human identity to accord with a certain image. To condemn the Church as Anti-Christ, as some of the reformers did, was to work towards the release of religious activity from the authoritative order which had formed it. This followed from the denial of the name Christian to the Catholic Church. For the reformers were themselves in search of the true meaning of what it was to be a Christian. The essence of this identity had been temporarily lost, but many were not long in convincing themselves that they had rediscovered the truth, which was necessarily to be imposed on the less fortunate.

Now this liberating tendency was encouraged, determined even, by one of the most important ideas of the early reformers, namely the notion of the community of Christians as a fellowship bound together by ties of faith and united in a quest for salvation. It was supposed that believers could live in a religious community without any need for the application of authority and force. In other words, there was, or could be, a rigid separation of religious conduct from political activity within a given community. It was Luther's hope, which he bequeathed to the tradition of German Pietism, that they, the two areas of conduct, could be kept apart without disturbing and jeopardising the authority of political institutions. To some, this was impossible, and the dominating obsession of such people as the Anabaptists was with preserving the purity of the religious community in the midst of a corrupt and corrupting world. They sought to achieve this end by separating their community from the traditional political society and by denying that their members owed any obligation to political authority at all.

But, of course, there was no complete withdrawal from the necessities of historical existence even for religion's sake. And the result of these opinions was to jeopardize a whole tradition of order and authority, for, clothed as they were in the language and vocabulary of religion, and aimed as they were at an audience that considered religious experience to be universal, they could not fail to impress a set of attitudes that would have profound repercussions on the conduct and outlook of their followers. Yet, because religious experience and political activity were so intimately connected by traditional usage, any attempt to separate the two could bring all the authority of the old tradition down on those who made the effort, and so, without organization, the Lutheran church appeared increasingly vulnerable to political pressures, while the Anabaptist congregations seemed to have escaped the 'world' only to have been overcome by internal disorders. Paradoxically, it became necessary for a vision of religious experience which emphasized the personal relationship of the believer with God and the voluntary nature of the religious community to have some order and organization.

Calvinism was a reflection of this paradox, and yet it offered an escape. For it implied both the destruction and creation of order. Anti-Christ had brought order to the world at the expense of true Christianity; now true Christianity would destroy this old order and create a new community. But what was important about Calvinism was not simply its passion for order, but the fact that this passion was centred primarily not on the state or commonwealth but on the church. While politics played an important role in Calvinist thought and action, it did so mainly in relation to a conception of the church as the

new community. And as far as this church community was concerned, it attempted to provide those organizational principles that Luther and the Anabaptists had failed to supply. Thus Calvin proposed a church polity that should aim at self-sufficiency. And as mark of its self-sufficiency was a discipline that was rigid and unchanging through time. Most, if not all, the details of this new schema were to be found in the Scriptures.

Calvinism¹ was, then, the doctrine that provided the organizational principles that the early reformers had either thought unnecessary or lacked. Yet, in theory at least, Calvinism is not to be considered as a doctrine that was merely organizational in intent.² How, in the end, it brought discipline out of the word is a complicated process which reveals the ambiguities of Calvinism, and of all those creeds that insist they possess the 'truth' which is yet not recognised by all.

The centre of Calvin's thought from which he considered that all else followed in some fashion was the clear distinction he attempts to draw between God, who is independent and self-determining, and the world of man and nature. In matters that directly concern God's divinity, therefore, freedom and not necessity is the appropriate criterion. Consequently, God is distinct in every way from the necessary regularity or irregularity of the natural order. Yet since this creation is God's, it follows that these necessities are created to serve, or to be directed or orientated towards, the sovereign rule of God.

1. This examination of Calvinism owes something to M. Walzer, The Revolution of the Saints, New York, 1968 (1st edn. 1965); William Haller, The Rise of Puritanism, New York, 1939; P. Miller, The New England Mind: the Seventeenth Century, Cambridge, Mass., 1954. There is an interesting review of Walzer's book by R. T. Vann, in History & Theory, vol. VII, 1968
2. As Walzer appears to consider it.

In short, Calvin's God is independent of, yet ruler over, the created order. In this way Calvin propounds a distinction between divine command and the natural world. There is nothing that mediates between these two orders of existence except the divine institution. There was thus no place in Calvinism for the 'natural' and rational God of Aquinas and Hooker. Their unitary view of reality was not shared by Calvin.

Just as man in Hooker's thought reflects the unity and distinctions within existence, so, according to Calvin, man is created with the capacity to reflect in himself this distinction between voluntary determination and natural necessity. The true fulfilment of man, as Calvin frequently reiterates, is voluntary, absolute obedience to God. In history, however, man falls short of this goal and surrenders to natural necessity, thus causing disruption and disorder in himself, as well as in the natural world. Sinful or fallen man, consequently, must be driven externally by the necessities of nature, by 'natural law'¹, in addition to political coercion, in the direction of that genuine obedience he ought to will to accept of his own accord. In his fallen state man is driven back to the point of voluntary devotion toward God. The very fact that he must be driven from the outside, is, however, the stigma of his depravity.

That man is wicked and sinful makes necessary the ever-present need for control and restraint. In this way political

1. For a discussion of natural law in Calvin see J. T. McNeill, 'Natural Law in the Teaching of the Reformers', Journal of Religion, vol.26, 1946. This article which argues for the great importance of natural law in the works of the Reformers has been severely criticized by Walzer for not dealing adequately with the radical theory of the Fall and the separation of the spheres of freedom and necessity in the discussion of natural law. See The Revolution of the Saints, p. 32.

order within the world is justified. Such conditions qualify and condition even the holiness of the sacred community. In man's original, innocent state, of course, political order and coercion were unnecessary. Calvin subscribed to the traditional Christian view, which Luther likewise accepted, that man in his innocence knew directly the law of God and required no special revelation nor external authority to bring him nearer to it. Politically, and even religiously, however, this state was of little importance. In it Calvin had little interest.

The Fall in contrast was of interest in this respect, that it had created a completely asocial man, a creature hating submission and continually striving to dominate others. Initially, therefore, man's alienation was double in character - from God and from society.¹ 'Innumerable are the evils that beset human life; innumerable, too, the deaths that threaten it.'² Only by divine aid could men be saved from this great uncertainty and anxiety. For all men, therefore, and not merely for the Elect, God has established social and political order:

'For he knows with what great restlessness human nature flames, with what fickleness it is borne hither and thither, how its ambition longs to embrace various things at once.'³

But of itself social and political order does not bring spiritual peace. It does at least provide or 'promote general peace and tranquillity'.⁴

In the order of nature lordship and political authority have a necessary place. Authority and submission to a social and political order are not the products of natural sociability nor of rational consent, they are both the creations of God

1. The following three paragraphs owe much to Walzer.

2. Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, ed. J.T. McNeill London, 1961, I, xvii, 10, p. 223.

3. Ibid. III, x, 6, p. 724

4. Ibid, IV, xx, 2, p. 1487.

who

'to shame men which are reasonable creatures, saith that the feare of princes and magistrates ought to extend even to brute beasts'.¹

And it was God who instituted princes and who implanted fear in the hearts of their subjects. This was proved, Calvin wrote, whenever we see thousands of men, ambition in them all, living in a quiet obedience to a prince. And 'all the kingdoms of this world are clearly founded on the power and beneficence of Christ'.² Moreover, God inspires in men that 'fear without which it is certain they [men] would never submit'.³ God was, therefore, the creator of all political authority and order.

Peace and order were achieved, then, firstly through obedience to the commands of established authority. But Calvin has nothing to say of civilization and the growth of human achievement in this regard. Society and polity were merely matters of discipline and order. And in keeping with this attitude toward political authority, Calvin regarded the magistrate merely as an office-holder, occupying his particular 'calling' within society, and just as potentially corrupt as other men. In short, the polity was a matter of force and order. It provided something useful and necessary. Yet order was not continuous in the world for, in order that men may not become too involved with their earthly desires, God

'to counter this evil.... instructs his followers in the unity of the present life by continual proof of its miseries. Therefore, that they may not promise themselves a deep and secure peace in it, he permits them often to be troubled and plagued either with wars or tumults, or robberies, or other injuries'.⁴

1. Calvin, Sermons upon the Fifth Book of Moses, London, 1583, sermon 36, p. 214. (Copy in the John Rylands Library.)
2. Calvin, Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Daniel, Edinburgh, 1852, 2 vols., vol. 1, p. 179.
3. Calvin, Homilies on I Samuel, quoted Doumergue, Jean Calvin vol. V, Lausanne, 1917, p. 493.
4. Calvin, Institutes, III, ix, 1, p. 712-713.

And often kingdoms may fall too for apparently no cause, for

'God has many reasons, and often hidden ones, why he raises one man and humbles another; yet this point ought to be uncontroverted by us. No kings can possess any authority unless God extends his hand to them and props them up. When he wishes to remove them from power, they fall of their own accord; not because there is any change in the changes of the world, but because God, as it is said in the Book of Job (xii, 18), deprives those of the sword whom he had formerly entrusted with it'.¹

This, then, is the state and nature of fallen man according to Calvin. Obedience to God is difficult to achieve. And in Calvin's thought Christ alone ~~was~~ the one who ~~was~~ voluntarily obedient to God and, therefore, his 'Body' (the Church) is the incarnation of a new order, an order where men organize their conduct according to God's will with enthusiasm and willing obedience. Religiously, and, to a very important degree, practically, the church is a special community distinct in theory and practice from the old order of natural necessity and coercion. It is a community where vigorous, self-conscious participation in moral and ecclesiastical affairs is the order. As a distinctive 'movement', Calvinism, whose discipline is constructed in relation to these considerations, organized an independent style of conduct in which self-determining voluntary activity was the ideal. Activity is thus thought of as a successive imitation of sacred actions. In regard to this area of activity, which the Church circumscribes, a new vision of time is constructed in terms of moments of creation (or recreation rather than moments of transmission.

Calvin thus places an important emphasis upon a voluntary and sacred pattern of church organization in order to guard against all infringement of the 'common right and liberty of

1. Calvin, Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Daniel, vol. 1, p.333-334.

the Church.¹ This emphasis on both personal election and sacred institutional pattern marks a crucial relationship in Calvin's thought. For as one is chosen by God, so one is able to choose with respect to the ordering of God's 'new community'. But the new community should be 'an actual exemplification of the Divine Institution'.² And from this comes the emphasis of a great volume of Calvinist literature that the form of the Church polity, unlike those of political order, did not depend upon historical tradition and circumstance, upon present authority and legal arrangements, but had been set for all time in the Word of God. Political order was subject quite simply to apparently irrational change, but the church only to corruption and reform, and return to first principles. Christian conduct must, therefore, always endeavour to recreate the sacred institutional root of the Church.

All this, Calvin suggests, might be discerned by a 'true' Christian within the Scriptures. And these Scriptures are self-validating despite the flood of Calvinist literature on all aspects of their content. True Christians know by illumination, by faith that the Scriptures are the Word of God. They have an inner persuasion, in this case, granted to them by God, so compelling that it becomes the complete guarantee of their religious experience. This inner certainty not only assures them that the Scriptures are the Word of God, but compels them upon reading them (the Scriptures) to grasp their meaning and believe. For the elect there is, consequently, a double

1. Calvin, Institutes, IV, iii, 15, p. 1066.

2. Ibid, IV, iv, 1, p. 1068. 'It will be useful to recognise in these characteristics of the ancient church the form which will represent to our eyes some image of the divine institution.'

illumination, providing first, the rule of faith, the Scriptures themselves, and second, the rule of Scripture, that is, the means for believing and discerning its message. And this double illumination of the rule of faith and its application gives the true believer complete assurance.¹

Now the basic evidence for the first Calvinists of the truth of their views was inner persuasion. This inner persuasion was not at all illusory, yet in the world itself they need the comfort of fellow travellers (this phrase is not used in the derogatory sense). And their success was a sign for them of the correctness of their views. And so 'ful persuasion doth separate the chosen children of God from the castaways and is the prayers of the Saintes'.² The argument and the process is, of course, circular. The criterion of religious experience is inner persuasion, the guarantee of the authenticity of inner persuasion is that it is caused by God (and so is their success), and of this they are assured by inner persuasion.

Calvinism was thus in a special sense a religion of the Book, and it emphasised the divine origin of the Scriptures rather than their transmission. It is not the situation, the present that makes any difference to the content of the message, but the actual message itself that is supremely important. Yet the message is not opaque for a book, even a sacred Book, stands in need of interpretation. For they are composed of words which are not entirely dependent on usage and presumption only. Thus

' as durable material objects they cut across the processes of transmission and create new patterns of social time; they speak direct to remote generations, whose interpretation of

1. Calvin, Institutes, I, vii, 1-5, pp. 74-81.

2. Theodore Beza, A Discourse of the True and Visible Marks of the Catholique Church, London, 1592, p. 44.

them may differ from that of intervening transmitters of the tradition they express [And] every reader is a potential radical; non-traditional interpretations arise, and with them the question of the authority to be employed in reading and interpreting documents'.¹

It is, therefore, not merely a question of random inspiration. Perhaps more important is what the Sacred Book contains. And here Calvinism attempted to cut off other potential and actual interpretations. The justification for what they considered the Sacred Book contained was again circular. Yet this was not enough to impose the divine institution whose form was outlined in the Scriptures. Once religion becomes a matter of institutional order it becomes subject to the criteria of practice. And in this regard, the example of Geneva, the godly city, was particularly important.²

Just as God, then, is distinct from the created order, but at the same time is the one who ultimately directs all things, so the church is both distinct from and also the ultimate 'model' for human conduct. Accordingly, the church defines the principles for directing moral and religious conduct, and is 'assisted' by the political powers in implementing aspects of its discipline. The Geneva achievement makes it clear, however, that, while the ideal was always a voluntary, self-determining order in which men responded to God 'of their own accord', a fact supposedly manifest by the institutional independence of a relatively consensual church, Calvin was in no way opposed to a high degree

1. J. G. A. Pocock, 'Time, Institutions and Understanding: An Essay on Traditions and their Understanding' in Politics and Experience, ed. by P. King and B. C. Parekh, Cambridge, 1969, p. 225.
2. R. M. Kingdom, Geneva and the Coming of the Wars of Religion in France, Geneva, 1956, and Geneva and the French Protestant Movement, Geneva, 1967. These books give a good idea of Calvinist organization out of Geneva. The latter book also has a discussion of resistance theory.

of regimentation in religious and political affairs. He appears to have been ready to use many means to achieve the ideal. For to Calvin, the present moment was a decisive time in the actual realization of God's kingdom, a kairos,¹ a crisis reached in the fulness of time, like the age of the Prophets, or the age of the Apostles. It was necessary, therefore, for the truly elect to be a disciplined group, the supreme example of the new religion's power and authority. And as they had proven their godliness by their rigorous self-control, so they carried their message forth into the world. They could not withdraw to contemplate some private vision, for it is not 'sound theology to confine a man's thoughts so much to himself'. Indeed

'It is certainly the duty of a Christian man to ascend higher than merely to seek and secure salvation of his own soul. [He was in fact] to set before him as a prime motive of his existence zeal to show forth the glory of God.'²

A magistrate, therefore, who subscribed to the true faith was obliged not only to resist a plundering and heretical tyrant; it was also his constant duty, in a world whose normal progress was of degeneration and corruption, to endeavour to lead men back to the worship of God.

And here we may note another contradiction or ambiguity in Calvinism. Calvin himself, when he came to discuss temporal authority in the last book of the Institutes of the Christian Religion, condemned resistance on the ground that it involved rebellion against that order which, because it is there, must be the gift of divine dispensation. The magistrate is the vicar of God and to resist him is to resist the ordinance of God. At

1. For an interesting discussion of the term kairos see J. E. Smith, 'Time, Times and the Right Time: chronos and kairos' The Monist, vol. 53, 1969.
2. Calvin, 'Reply by John Calvin to the Letter of Cardinal Sadolet to the Senate and People of Geneva (1539) in Theological Treatises, trans. with introduction by J.K.S. Reid London 1954, p. 228.

the same time, when he came to deliver the 'Sermons on the Fifth Book of Moses' in 1555, he laid upon the magistrate the obligation of establishing true religion as his first duty and punishing the wicked as his second. And indeed, as soon as a situation actually arose in which a strong Calvinist minority had every prospect of protecting itself against persecution by resisting it - that is to say in France, Scotland and the Low Countries - the duty of establishing true religion was stressed at the expenses of the duty of submission to the heretic or wicked ruler.¹

Thus it is that from an emphasis on the voluntary nature of individual obedience to God we arrive at two general characteristics of Calvinist politics. They are the politics of perfection, and they are the politics of uniformity. 'Political activity is recognised as the imposition of a uniform condition of perfection upon human conduct.'² And this dilemma at the centre of Calvinism is that of all movements that insist that a perfect condition may be imposed in an imperfect world. Initially, of course, their coming together is, and must be, voluntary, but because their identity appears to revolve round a frail notion of perfection, they must assert themselves against untruth. Only in this way can those in possession of the 'truth' not dissipate or lose their new found identity. They devise new organizations to oppose the corruption of the old institutions. The covenant, for instance, represented a moral commitment to obey God's law, based upon a presumed internal assurance and

1. The logical point of Calvin's radicalism appears to be the concept of holy war discussed in the Sermons on Moses. For some indication of how much more radical this notion was in Calvin than in Augustine and Aquinas, see a short article by M. Walzer, 'Exodus 32 and the Theory of Holy War: the History of a Citation', The Harvard Theological Review, vol. 61, 1968.

2. M. Oakeshott, Rationalism in Politics, London, 1962, p. 6.

consent. It was a self-imposed submission to divinely authorized law, but this self-imposition had external implications, and the social enforcement in God's name supposedly brought one nearer to a recognition of its importance. With the covenant, Christian discipline was definitely substituted for traditional political order; all the citizens of the holy commonwealth conscientiously accepted an absolute dominion which they recognized as godly. And thus they assumed the identity of the elect by voluntary submission to God.

The paradox or ambiguity of this position is also illustrated by the practical effects of the pursuit of its implications. Traditional authority and order, on the one hand, was clearly subject to disruption by 'conscientious' men. They placed, or came to place, no value on the traditional political order if it did not seek to impose the true and godly discipline. And even if it did seek to do godly work, its status, authority and identity would be transformed in the great changes that would follow the imposition of the true discipline. On the other hand, the new discipline could prove immensely attractive to those communities subject to constant disruption from other sources. Its stringency would appear as a welcome antidote to anarchy.¹

In Theory and in practice, then, the paradox of a creed and movement that betrays both an inclination toward regimentation and toward self-determination reveals itself. It would, indeed, be hard to study Calvinism without attending to the emphasis upon an independent 'new order' that is set apart from

1. It was Hooker's opinion that Calvin brought order to Geneva and this in itself was to be commended. What happened afterwards to Calvinism was for Hooker quite another matter. See his remarks in the Preface and Chapter 6 of this work.

both the realm of natural necessity and political coercion. Both Calvin and the Presbyterians in England were passionately concerned with the church, and in their opinion the necessary first step in reforming both the commonwealth and the church was the 'liberation' of the church. It was necessary to free the church from mundane traditions and activities. And what stood out from these actions was the sacred. Action in this sphere of existence was regarded in its ideal form, not as the transmission, but as the recreation of the sacred. Thus, those who composed the church were ideally recreating that divine moment eternally present in the Word. The church was, in effect, an attempt to create and perpetually recreate that realm of freedom that Christ alone completely knew. The spiritual 'actions' of the members of the church were a timeless communication through the eternal Word with God. They were, therefore, the true elect, recreating, in their estimation, and confirming their election by every charismatic or godly act. Anything that falls short of this ideal is a corruption.

This, then, is the rationale of the Calvinist creed. To those who entered its sphere it appeared completely cogent. One of the reasons for this was that the arguments that led to the conclusion that the divine institution was revealed in the Scriptures were circular. For the true believer sees the truth in the Scriptures, the guarantee that the Scriptures contain the truth is that they are the Word of God, and of this he is assured because he has seen the truth. The true elect, the Calvinists, however, all see the same things (or nearly the same things). By definition, those who do not acknowledge the truth of the Calvinist creed are not true Christians.

Now the crucial point for Hooker in this circular argument

is the radical separation of the realm of freedom and choice from the area of natural necessity. This separation stems from Calvin's idea of God and the relation of God's creation to Himself. Politically these notions could not fail to have various repercussions, despite the theoretical separation between the spheres of 'human' activity, and despite Calvin's apparent support for the magistrate within his own sphere. For religion in the sixteenth century was, of course, one of the constitutive elements of social composition. Strife was undoubtedly embittered by the absoluteness of the demands of the new ideas. In the end Calvinism represented politics as a fight for the 'truth', not, for instance, the endless composition of claims in conflict. True religion, if it could not conquer by its truthfulness, must be established by use of the sword of necessity. But since Truth does not abolish time and historical imperfections, a pernicious confusion resulted. The ambitions on a commonwealth of the designs of a sect took on the purity of a holy war, compromise was a sin and a sign of corruption, and a tone of exasperated intransigence became common between rivals and opponents.

We may conclude by suggesting that such intransigence was the product of the participants talking past each other. Circular arguments were proclaimed as producing the vision of truth; and such argument is designed to silence further discussion. Yet in reality arguments claimed as absolute usually increase the volubility of human discourse unless 'truth' can gain victory in practice. Then there is merely the endless repetition of that truth. It must, however, be noted that it is only by the ordinary means of practical activity that true believers are able to practice what they preach. Hence the need for and frequent discussion about 'godly instruments'.

And while perfection has never been a realizable state in conditions of historical imperfection, there has been no shortage of visions of perfection and equally no lack of attempts to impose these dreams.

6.

HOOKER'S CHARACTERIZATION OF THE REFORMING 'CAUSE'.

The opponents of the Presbyterians in the 1590s employed what has been termed a 'smear' technique by accusing them of advocating anabaptist doctrines.¹ For in so doing they threatened all the established institutions of the English Commonwealth. Many of the leading advocates of Presbyterianism denied the charge, but the widespread support of their ideas in the lower orders of society merely increased suspicion. Hooker, consequently, felt it necessary to remark on the social character of reformed religion before passing on to an examination of the arguments involved. The most extended of these remarks are to be found in the Preface, but the Dedication to Book Five should not be overlooked, for even here Hooker cannot forbear to make some passing comments on the politically dangerous character of the 'reform' movement.

He warns not to underestimate its potential strength.

And

'if any marvel how a thing in itself so weak could import any great danger, they must consider not so how much small the spark is that flieth up, as how apt things about it are to take fire. Bodies politic being subject as much as natural to dissolution by divers means, there are undoubtedly more estates overthrown through diseases bred within themselves than through violence from abroad'.²

Hooker himself is well aware how long the 'cause' has been ignored by those he considers ought to have known better. As a

1. See C. H. George, 'Puritanism in History and Historiography' Past and Present, vol. XLI, 1968.
2. Eccl. Pol., Dedication, Book V.

consequence its strength has increased and it has attracted converts from all corners of society.¹ It is the duty, therefore, of all those who are aware that the 'disease' may spread further to cure it as soon as possible and by all means available.

Hooker, as we know, offers in the Ecclesiastical Polity to examine the entire legal arrangements of the English Church. By this he hoped to 'prove' that the reasons proffered by the reformer were at best merely probable and that their zeal and ambition were consequently misplaced. But the Preface is hardly the work of a man who is seeking merely to clear his own mind and arrive at some settled conclusions. Rather, it is an open attack on the character of reformed religion in general, and we may discern in it no great admiration for the original founder, Calvin. For the tone of Hooker's writing in regard to Calvin and the establishment of the discipline in Geneva appears, to me at least, to be somewhat ironical. The first two sentences about Calvin are completely disarming:

'A founder it had, whom, for mine own part, I think incomparably the wisest man that ever the French church did enjoy, since the hour it enjoyed him.'

Hooker goes on to remark that his education was in civil law. But (and here is the rub) 'divine knowledge he gathered, not by hearing or reading so much, as by teaching others',² In short, he was never so devout as when levying claims on others.

Similarly, the habits of the Swiss city-states in religious disputes, and the manner in which Calvin finally settled in

1. According to Hooker, 'there are divers motives drawing men to favour mightily these opinions, wherein their persuasions are but weakly settled; and if the passions of the mind be strong, they easily sophisticate the understanding; they make it apt to believe upon very slender warrant, and to imagine infallible truth where scarce any probable show appeareth.' Eccl. Pol., Dedication, Bk. V.

2. Preface, ii, 1.

Geneva is described in such a fashion that both the inhabitants and Calvin himself appear quite foolish.¹ For the 'truth' of the discipline was not the cause of its final establishment. In the end it was the fashionable reputation of Calvin that brought about its adoption by the people of Geneva. They had previously expelled Calvin for they wisely 'would not quietly, without contradiction or murmur, submit themselves unto the orders which their solemn oath had bound them to obey'.² In the event, however, Calvin returned since 'they thought it better to be somewhat hardly yoked at home, than for ever abroad discredited', for having expelled from their presence a man of international repute.³

It was true that order and authority were needed in Geneva and it was because of this need that Calvin's discipline prevailed. Hooker affirms that

'This device I see not how the wisest at that time living could have bettered, if we duly consider what the present estate of Geneva did then require.'⁴

In short, a recipe for order is always of some use in conditions of anarchy. But the actual discipline imposed by Calvin was not considered by Hooker to be absolutely indifferent to time and place, and readily applicable to all polities. In general,

1. 'It was the manner of those times, (whether through men's desire to enjoy alone the glory of their own enterprises, or else because the quickness of their own occasions required present dispatch; so it was) that every particular church did that within itself, which some few of their own thought good, by whom the rest were all directed. Such number of churches then being, though free within themselves, yet small, common conference beforehand might have eased them of much trouble. But a greater inconvenience it bred, that every later endeavoured to be certain degrees more removed from conformity with the church of Rome, than the rest before had been: whereupon grew marvellous dissimilitudes, and by reason thereof, jealousies, heart-burnings, jars and discords amongst them.' Preface, ii, 2.
2. Preface, ii, 2.
3. Preface, ii, 4.
4. Preface, ii, 3.

Hooker concludes that 'that which Calvin did for establishment of his discipline, seemeth more commendable than that which he taught for the countenancing of it established'.¹ Thus, while order and authority were required, Calvin's discipline is as contingent as any other form of order. It is not the absolutely 'true' discipline for

'what argument are ye able to show, whereby it was ever proved by Calvin, that any one sentence of Scripture doth necessarily enforce these things, or the rest wherein your opinion concurrerth with his against the orders of your own church.'²

Nonetheless, many do hold that what Calvin has to propound is necessarily true. His books are 'almost the very canon to judge both doctrine and discipline by'.³ Many, consequently, are able to defend themselves against their detractors and are well instructed in the doctrines of reformed religion. But in the Preface Hooker is not in the main concerned with actual arguments. It is the 'vulgar sort' who make up the majority of the Presbyterian movement that are the object of his attention. He advises the intellectual leaders of the movement to

'Weigh what doth move the common sort so much to favour this innovation, and it shall soon appear to you, that the force of particular reasons which for your several opinions are alleged is a thing whereof the multitude never did nor could so consider as to be therewith wholly carried; but certain general inducements are used to make saleable your cause in gross; and when once men have cast a fancy towards it, any slight declaration of specialities will serve to lead forward men's inclinable and prepared minds.'⁴

Generally, while Hooker may to some extent admire the mind of his fellow intellectual Travers, he clearly cannot stomach those who are certain for the simplest of reasons, especially when

1. Preface, ii, 7.
2. Preface, ii, 7.
3. Preface, ii, 8.
4. Preface, iii, 5.

their conclusions are contrary to the opinions of the established church.¹ Their simplicity is a sign of their ignorance of their duties as members of the community of England. Thus, while the Ecclesiastical Polity may be a sophisticated and complex argument against a mistaken but worthy set of beliefs, the Preface is a veiled plea for the legal prosecution of those who are not amenable to 'rational' argument.

This denigratory and sarcastic tone is repeatedly to be seen in those sections in which the 'inducements' for the advancement of the 'cause' are examined. Here is the reality behind the disputes over Scripture, reason, experience and ecclesiastical arrangements. And it is clear that Hooker disapproves of what he sees. For the beliefs of the radicals are not merely incorrect, as Hooker seeks to demonstrate, but, more important, have proved politically dangerous as the Preface suggests. The inducements in regard to this movement have no logical connection at all with the 'truth', for

'the method of winning the people's affection unto a general liking of 'the cause' (for so ye term it) hath been this. First, in the hearing of the multitude, the faults especially of higher callings are ripped up with marvellous exceeding severity and sharpness of reproof, which being oftentimes done begetteth a great opinion of integrity, zeal and holiness, to such constant reprovers of sin, as by likelihood would never be so much offended at that which is evil, unless themselves were singularly good'.²

And the next tactic is 'to impute all faults and corruptions, where with the world aboundeth, unto the kind of ecclesiastical government established'.³ After such preparation the time will

1. 'Let the vulgar sort amongst you know, that there is not the least branch of the cause wherein they are so resolute, but to the trial of it so great more appertaineth than their conceit doth reach unto.' Preface, ii, 8.
2. Preface, iii, 6.
3. Preface, iii, 7.

be ripe for recommending a new form of government as the necessary remedy for all the present discontents. For people who are 'possessed with dislike and discontent at things present' are mad enough 'to imagine that anything (the virtue whereof they hear recommended) would help them; but the most which they least have tried'.¹ But from here they proceed to an even more dangerous position. This is the persuading of people 'credulous and over-capable of such pleasing errors' that it is by means of special illumination granted to them by God that they are able to see in the Scriptures those things which others have not been able to discern.

But this claim is pernicious arrogance. Hooker argues that

'There are but two ways whereby the Spirit leadeth men into all truth; the one extraordinary, the other common; the one belonging but unto some few, the other extending itself unto all that are of God; the one, that which we call by a special divine excellency Revelation, the other Reason'.²

He suggest, therefore, that either the Presbyterians are all Prophets or they should submit their opinions to the judgement of Reason, indeed to the common judgement of all men. That they are all prophets is nonsense and Hooker immediately reveals his anti-enthusiast disposition by endeavouring to give a 'psychological' explanation for the spread of radical opinions.

'Most sure it is, that when men's affections do frame their opinions, they are in defence of error more earnest a great deal than (for the most part) sound believers in the maintenance of truth apprehendeth according to the nature of that evidence which Scripture yieldeth: which being in some things plain, as in the principles of Christian doctrine; in some things, as in these matters of discipline, more dark and doubtful; frameth correspondently that inward assent which God's most gracious Spirit worketh by it as by his effectual instrument.

1. Preface, iii, 8.

2. Preface, iii, 10.

It is not therefore the fervent earnestness of their persuasion, but the soundness of those reasons whereupon the same is built, which must declare their opinions in these things to have been wrought by the Holy Ghost, and not by the fraud of that evil spirit, which is even in his illusions strong.¹

We may conclude thus that the Presbyterians are generally victims of self-deception, and are thoroughly evil in their passionate and arrogant self-assertion. They are indeed ~~the~~^a self-chosen people, who, because they consider that they know the 'true' meaning of Scripture, are of the opinion that this 'doth thereby seal them to be God's children', and that 'as the state of the time now standeth, the most special token to know them that are God's children from others is an earnest affection that way'.²

Once a situation of this character is generated, it is difficult, if not impossible, to destroy it merely by argument, as Hooker realised only too well.

'Let any man of contrary opinion open his mouth to persuade them, they close up their ears, his reasons then weigh not, all is answered with the rehearsal of the words of John: "We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us: as for the rest ye are of the world: for this world's pomp and vanity it is that ye speak, and the world, whose ye are, heareth you."³

Hooker implicitly at least recognized the impregnable circularity of the Presbyterian position. Indeed, suggest to them that they are unable to judge in such matters, 'their answer is "God hath chosen the simple"'. Attempt to show them that they are irrational (which is presumptuous in any case) 'they have bucklers of like defense: "Christ's own apostle was accounted mad"'.⁴ Point out to them that the authority of the present government is against

1. Preface, iii, 10.

2. Preface, iii, 14.

3. Preface, iii, 14.

4. Preface, iii, 14.

them, 'they fasten on the head of the Lord's viceregent's here on earth whatsoever they any where find uttered against the cruelty of blood-thirsty men'.¹ In short, the attitude of the 'vulgar' Presbyterian is practically beyond shaking by argument. For such men, persecution is the only answer.

In any case, the intellectual presuppositions of the movement were mistaken in Hooker's view. For him, at least, the general position could be deflated at its source by 'reasoned' argument. It was not merely a matter of juxtaposing his argument to their position. His own argument was a 'demonstration' of the illusory nature of the radical presuppositions. The necessary principles enunciated by the intellectual leaders of the Presbyterian 'movement' were, in Hooker's judgement, in no way to be supported, least of all by the Scripture. Nor could any instance be given of the adoption of this discipline by any church in previous experience.² Ultimately the reasons offered for the overthrow of the present church in England and for the institution of 'true' discipline are in Hooker's eyes at best only probable and not necessary. And only unto 'a necessary proof that they are not good' must those things that are established give place.³ It cannot be demonstrated that the Presbyterian principles are valid and, therefore, 'for the ecclesiastical laws of this land, we are led by great reason to observe them, and ye by no necessity to impugn them'.⁴

1. Preface, iii, 15.

2. 'Besides these last times which for insolency, pride and egregious contempt of all good order, are the worst, there are none wherein ye can truly affirm, that the complete form of your discipline, or the substance thereof, was practiced.' Preface, iv, 15.

3. Preface, vi, 6.

4. Preface, vii, 1.

It was the militant fundamentalism, radical disposition and personal exclusiveness of the Presbyterian movement that provoked the malice and disdain of Hooker. He clearly disliked the excessive emphasis placed upon Calvin's writings and the example of the reformed churches on the Continent. He refused to admit the Presbyterian tendency to exalt the Scriptures beyond 'reason' and to depress all traditions of corporate existence. To him, these notions were irrelevant to the situation at hand in England. In contrast, he himself emphasised the traditions of the Church in England which, according to him, had not been radically changed by the 'Reformation'. This in no way implies that Hooker was an obstinate opponent of all attempts at gradual alteration and accommodation to change. His kind of conservatism in fact stemmed from the assumption that man-made edifices could be, and, in many cases, were satisfactory, while endeavours to reconstitute them entirely were all too frequently ill-conceived. The Presbyterian clamour for an irrational and impossible project would bring about the collapse of the Church as it then was. In the course of this struggle the clergy, in Hooker's judgement, would fall into disrespect, factional differences would undermine devotion to proper worship and true piety, and the Presbyterian obsession would spread eventually to affairs of state. The Queen's prerogative would ultimately be destroyed, all social order, legal principles and university education would be thrown into disarray.¹ The nation would be tumbled into civil strife and the intricate fabric of English society would be rent apart.

Hooker's great political fear, therefore, was of the calamitous change that might ensue from the practice of the precept

1. Preface, viii, 2, 3, 4.

that 'we ought to search what things are consonant to God's will, not which be most for our own ease'.¹ An even greater nightmare was that as the radicals' discipline was considered to be 'the absolute commandment of Almighty God, it must be received although the world by receiving it should be clean turned upside down'.² As to where complete religious reformation might lead if the Presbyterians had their way, an historical example was provided, in Hooker's mind, by the Anabaptists. The intention behind their actions was likewise

'That Christ might have dominion over all; that all crowns and sceptres might be thrown down at his feet; that no other reign over Christian men but he, no regiment keep them in awe but his discipline, amongst them no sword at all be carried besides his, the sword of spiritual excommunication. For this cause they laboured with all their might in over-turning the seats of magistracy, because Christ hath said, 'Resist not evil'; in forbidding oaths, the necessary means of judicial trial, because Christ hath said, 'Swear not at all'; finally, in bringing in community of goods, because Christ by his Apostles hath given the world such example, to the end that man might exceed one another not in wealth the pillar of secular authority, but in virtue'.³

It might be objected that the parallel was not exact or appropriate enough to the situation in England, but it was close enough, so Hooker thought, to act as a warning as to where politics as the pursuit of 'truth', without accommodation to changing circumstances might lead.⁴ For he considered that England was faced with a particularly dangerous situation. And if 'devolution' was the consequence of Anabaptist fundamentalism, it was because the danger was at first underestimated.⁵ Likewise

1. Preface, viii, 5.

2. Preface, viii, 5.

3. Preface viii, 8.

4. 'That things doubtful are to be construed in the better part, is a principle not safe to be followed in matters concerning the public state of a commonweal.' Preface, viii, 13.

5. 'These men at first were only pitied in their error, and not much understood by any; the great humility, zeal, and devotion

many in high social and political positions in the English Commonwealth who have offered support to the Presbyterians are unfortunately not aware of the consequences that could ensue from this support. They should, therefore, be forced to recognize the character of this movement. For clearly if the radicals were allowed to persist in their activities, then the political consequences would, in Hooker's view, be similar to the havoc wrought on the Continent by the Anabaptists and other radical movements. With these, the Presbyterians share the desire that a uniform condition of perfection is a necessity. And so 'there remained after speculations, practice, whereby the whole world thereunto (if it were possible) might be framed'.¹

These, then, are the possible consequences that might ensue if the radicals were allowed to continue as they were doing. Of course, Hooker suggests, there are peaceful ways out of the impasse. One of these is through the learned judgement of a general council or assembly. And if such an assembly were to be gathered, the pronouncement of that body would have to be obeyed.² But, in the meantime, Hooker proposes an examination of the Presbyterian position and suggest to them that they obey the duly established laws. This is a reasonable request since

'As for the orders which are established, sith equity and reason, the law of nature, God and man, do all favour that which is in being, till orderly judgement of decision be given against; it is but justice to exact of you, and perverseness in you it should be to deny, thereunto your willing obedience'.³

And this hiatus will give Richard Hooker the opportunity to

3.(cont) which appeared to be in them, was in all men's opinion a pledge of their harmless meaning.' Preface, vii, 9.

1. Preface, viii, 11.

2. 'So full of wilfullness and self-liking is our nature, that without some definite sentence, which being given may stand, and a necessity of silence on both sides afterward imposed, small hope there is that strifes thus far prosecuted will in short time quietly end.' Preface, vi, 3.

3. Preface, vi, 5.

examine from an 'objective' point of view the presuppositions and conclusions of his chosen adversaries.

PART IV

METAPHOR AND REALITY

7.

GOD AND HIS INTELLIGIBLE UNIVERSE

(i)

In Hooker's judgement the opponents of the Presbyterians 'are accused as men that will not have Jesus Christ to rule over them, but have wilfully cast his statutes behind their backs, hating to be reformed and made subject unto the sceptre of his disciple'.¹

His objections to this exclusive claim of the Presbyterians were based on what he considered to be true and rational premises, the understanding of which was open to all who were prepared to listen. In general, these premises are not supported by extended argument, and they are not examined in any objective fashion. But they are accepted as the necessary point of departure for rational discourse. And in regard to the present controversy his intention is to show how one ought to think and act.² Disquieting opinions are fended off and intellectual problems disowned. In this way Hooker hopes that

'this world will teach them wisdom that have the capacity to apprehend it. And Our wisdom in this case must be such as doth not propose to itself 'to idion,' our own particular, the partial and immoderate desire whereof poisoneth wheresoever it taketh place; but the scope and mark which we are to aim at is 'to koinon,' the public and common good of all'.³

To the radical disposition of thought of the Presbyterians the Ecclesiastical Polity offers an 'objective' answer on three levels although these are all bounded by Hooker's practical intention. We have first the warning in the Preface to the 'vulgar sort' to mend their ways. If they do not, then they

1. Ecccl. Pol., I, i, 3.

2. Preface, vii, 1.

3. Ecccl. Pol., V, Dedication.

may expect to be punished for their persistent and irrational disobedience to the laws of the English Commonwealth. Secondly, at the level of absolute presuppositions, Hooker endeavours to outline a position that is a complete and thorough-going 'refutation' of the Calvinist idiom of thought. This leads on to the third level, an exhaustive elaboration of the ramifications of this point of view in regard to various particulars. And as may be seen from the amount of space given over to details, Hooker was not at all specifically interested in problems that his thought might raise. His first concern was with the fundamentalism of the Calvinist position with its rigid adherence to a purely Scriptural interpretation of authority and ecclesiastical organization. For such a position amounted to a complete denial of the rationality and efficacy of Hooker's own presuppositions. His defence of the Elizabeth^{an} Polity, in short, was bound up in his judgement with his whole view of experience.

Hooker considered Law as the norm of any activity within experience. Laws provided the necessary guide and enjoined the end of all activity.¹ They are the 'natural' principles provided by a rational and fecund God, and it was He, as appearances elaborately testify, who created every aspect of reality. The reasons for this creativity are known in their entirety only by Himself. But God does speak through nature, and the voice of nature is 'his instrument'.² And so knowledge of

'every the least thing in the whole world hath in it a second peculiar benefit unto us, inasmuch as it serveth to minister rules, canons, and laws, for men to direct their actions by which we properly term human'.³

1. Eccl. Pol., I, xvi, 8.

2. Eccl. Pol., I, vii, 3.

3. Eccl. Pol., I, viii, 5.

Nature is, then, law-governed, and this characteristic accounts for certain parallel features in each section or 'plane of being'. The most important aspect of this view of reality for Hooker in his dispute was that the hierarchical pattern of nature as a whole could be discerned also on the social 'plane'. Society was thus held to be a natural hierarchy of degrees and ranks. In the Ecclesiastical Polity Hooker is at pains to show that if social disorder is to be avoided, then the 'natural' social hierarchy would have to be maintained, for 'if things or persons be ordered, this doth imply that they are distinguished by degrees. For order is a gradual disposition'.¹ If attempts are made to change that order, then this must be carried out according to the appropriate criteria. And these were, in fact, usually what those in authority considered the circumstances demanded. In short, the idea of a 'natural' order is employed to justify a particular historical arrangement.²

The Great Chain of Being was, however, a doctrine not merely of law but of interdependence. All authorities in the universe are to hold to their station and function, not independently,

1. Eccl. Pol., VIII, ii, 2.

2. The natural view of reality provides the basis for a type of 'illustration', namely correspondence. There appears, therefore, in Hooker's project and in other works of the period frequent use of correspondences to illustrate resemblances in the ordered structure of nature. These illustrations provided, according to Greenleaf, 'great intellectual and aesthetic satisfaction as evidence of an ordered universe'. (W. H. Greenleaf, Order, Empiricism and Politics, Oxford, 1964, p. 26.) Whether the satisfaction was great or not is debatable, but to elaborate and illustrate a correspondence did indicate an 'argument' which was conventionally accepted. Thus it was that the presupposition of a universe created and ordered by God was supposedly verified. It would, however, appear from such 'arguments' that the Great Chain of Being and its persuasiveness as a view of reality were to some degree independent or prior to the effort.

It is, I consider, pointless to go into any more detail about correspondence since Greenleaf has done it so well in the work mentioned above.

but for the good of their inferiors (who depend on them) and subject to their superiors (on whom they, in turn, depend). Authority and obligation is by interdependence, and the force of obligation is that every person must keep to his own station and respect that of superiors. If this pattern of order were to be destroyed, none better would miraculously appear in its place, and no-one, least of all those of inferior position, would gain in any way whatsoever. Order imposed without authority and moral co-operation was disliked as being 'unnatural', and would in any case have been difficult to enforce. Order was necessarily to be accompanied by harmony, and this was a consequence of everyone occupying their 'natural' position and performing their 'true' function. And this emphasis on unity as a necessary condition of authority and its exercise existed in ecclesiastical as well as in civil affairs.

Ultimately, the Presbyterians had no place in their view of the godly community for 'natural' arguments supporting order and authority. At this level Hooker's opposition was aroused by their attack on natural law, by their disparagement of reason, and by their complete lack of understanding of historical experience in religious activity. 'Reformed' religion was therefore both an appeal to disorder, and a denial and a disruption of the proper hierarchy of society. And in Hooker's opinion the laws of God and nature may only be trampled down through arrogance and ignorance.

'There never was sin committed, wherein a less good was not preferred before a greater, and that wilfully; which cannot be done without the singular disgrace of Nature, and the utter disturbance of that divine order, whereby the pre-eminence of chiefest acceptance ^{is} is by the best things worthily challenged.'¹

1. Eccl. Pol., I, vii, 7.

The effects of transgression of God's rational precepts may be seen both in the corruption of lower nature itself and in the many specific examples of political and social disaster consequent upon pride and ambition of irrational individuals.

To Hooker, the demands of the Presbyterians for wholesale change in ecclesiastical organization were mistaken ideas, instigated and justified by the use of the wrong criteria. They amounted to nothing more than arrogance and wilful ignorance. If each man were to claim to be, in Hooker's own words, 'his own commander', disorder would inevitably follow. So dangerous is this course that

[Such a goal] shaketh universally the fabric of government, tendeth to anarchy and mere confusion, dissolveth families, dissipateth colleges, corporations, armies, overthroweth kingdoms, churches and whatsoever is now through the providence of God by authority and powers upheld'.¹

Claims of extreme personal freedom for whatever reason were not, therefore, to be tolerated, for they were destructive of order in the world. Change was by no means excluded from Hooker's world, but it was to be pursued with great caution.

In all this, what Hooker is seeking is a clearer identification of what it is to be a member of the English Commonwealth. He argues that one of the first priorities of membership is the hierarchical order of nature and of the traditional order of English society. This means, however, that Hooker is working within an area set by his own presuppositions. Consequently, while he and his opponents share certain assumptions without which neither would be Christian, yet he considers them to be mistaken in their reasoning. For if

1. Eccl. Pol., V, lxxi, 4.

the existence of a divine creator is believed and accepted, then certain things must necessarily follow. God, for instance, is by definition a perfect rational Being - that is the meaning of the term God. To deny any part of his perfection, goodness and rationality is to deny the reality and character of God, and to convict his creation of irrationality. ~~And~~ To do this is not merely irrational and absurd in itself, it is also socially and politically dangerous.

It is alleged that, if one proceeds in the proper manner from true and correct premises, a fuller understanding of the place of reason and experience within the world will follow. From this examination we can grasp, Hooker suggests, that the radical position is incorrect as to its premises and wrong in its conclusions. And so in the face of this intellectually mistaken and politically disastrous movement Hooker endeavours to establish the correct view of the nature of experience, and the character of reason, revelation and historical existence. This is his point of departure in his attempt to establish the validity and true authority of the church in England. And, with Hooker, the 'natural' idiom, in most cases, is a form of justification and, indeed, self-congratulation. Nature merely affirms what he considers to be the truth. And the truth happens to be what nature affirms. For nature itself presents 'the very foundation and root, the highest well-spring and fountain of good law'.¹

(ii)

Hooker seeks to oppose radical notions of random conscience and 'inspiration' by an appeal to nature and order. He is most

1. Eccles. Pol., I, i, 2.

concerned to maintain the efficacy of this idea of nature in the face of the radical notion of an absolute distinction between God and his 'natural' creation. It is necessary, he contends, to show how this natural mode of explaining and justifying political actions implies how values are determined, information acquired and 'correct' decisions taken. This involved Hooker in elaborating the 'natural' conception of the universe, and of human experience, within his context. Now, this might appear to be something of a philosophical answer to a philosophical question, but in Hooker's case it is not, for he is quite ready with a formula to reveal at a glance, so to speak, how man's 'super-natural' knowledge, attained by revelation, is related to man's natural knowledge, attained through sense and intellect. According to Hooker, there is no discrepancy at all between nature and revelation. They are both a reflection of God's activity. It would, therefore, be irrational and unnatural to dispute the efficacy of any part of God's creation.

It is true that the controversy, in which the Church of England was involved, concerned, from one point of view, only the ceremonies and the proper rules of ecclesiastical organization. But in spite of the opinion of some modern commentators¹, it was not as simple as that; and Hooker obviously considered that to regard the conflict in this manner was too superficial by far. As we have seen, many did wish to 'purify' the divine service of elements which they thought to be 'corrupt'. But involved in this was more than a desire to eradicate the practices of the present. The reforms required by the radicals were more

1. See, for example, G. R. Elton, England Under the Tudors, London, 1956, pp. 424-425. He considers that 'there was precious little between the sides'.

than bound up with an affection for 'improvement'. For the claim that they had found or rediscovered the true Word was a necessity for those to whom this was the main hope of salvation. It was this understanding of the character of the Scriptures as the only refuge from the area of 'natural necessity' that was challenged by Hooker and considered to be entirely mistaken. The only possible way to make that clear and understandable, and thereby to 'demonstrate' their irrationality and absurdity was to reconsider the first principles of the correct understanding of experience.

Hooker, having chosen this approach gives a thorough appraisal of it in the Preface.

'Wherefore seeing that the laws and ordinances in particular whether such as you yourselves would have established, when the mind doth sift and examine them, it must needs have often recourse to a number of doubts and questions about the nature, kinds, and qualities of laws in general; whereof unless it must be thoroughly informed, there will appear no certainty to stay our persuasion upon. I have for that course set down in the first place an introduction on both sides needful to be considered: declaring therein what Law is, how different kinds of Law there are, and what force they are of according to each kind.'¹

Here we have at the very beginning of Hooker's work a short-hand expression of a theory of natural teleology and a theory of natural kinds. According to this theory, each individual species is endowed with an essence or a nature. This it has in common with certain other individuals by virtue of which they are classifiable as belonging to a particular genus, and so on up to the highest being of the classificatory hierarchy. This classificatory hierarchy of kinds is natural in the sense that the distinction between defining attributes and accidental traits is considered to be real, and not a merely conventional distinction.

1. Preface, vii, 2.

It is, indeed, a necessary principle that must be reproduced in discourse instead of being itself an historically justified intellectual or linguistic achievement. The 'natural' priority of the traits that constitute these 'essences' generates a basic vocabulary for identifying individual things; and the manner of distinguishing particulars within experience that is thus imposed is a necessary aspect of reality. To ignore it (as the radicals did) would result not just in departures from a particular system of identifying reference but in a distortion of the 'true' natures of the things classified.

The doctrine of natural teleology can be described as a further stipulation attached to the theory of natural kinds. Thus, the 'natural' system of classification defines a function or an end (expressed here as law) that is proper to the bearers of any given nature. Accordingly, it will be impossible to identify a particular as having any specific nature without thereby subscribing to a number of propositions in regard to the distinctive good of that thing. And right conduct for rational beings consists in doing what realizes their distinctive 'telos'. A 'philosophical' system that would enable one to identify a person as a human being, while leaving open all questions as to what he ought properly to do, is thus in effect excluded (at least as far as the absolute end is concerned). The reason for this may be sought in Hooker's conviction that what is real, independent of all discourse, is a combination of actuality with a special potentiality for realizing certain distinctive ends, and that this fact must be reflected in any viable and rational scheme of classification.

Hooker, then, considers it to be an obvious principle

reality that all things which are in being 'have some operation not violent or causal'¹, and indeed 'do work after a sort according to law'². And he proceeds to argue from this regularity of working, which he assumes to exist in nature, that there must be some author of this ordered and regular universe. This author is, of course, God, who does nothing without cause or reason, and who ordains things because of his goodness and virtue.³ In other words, Hooker first presupposes that the world or nature itself has some underlying principles of order which become apparent when the light of reason is turned on them. From this premise it is concluded that this order must be a reflection of God's rationality and goodness. And Hooker is certain that the goodness of the world, which God has created, points to a quality in God's essence. In a similar way, he argues that God, being the originator of the justice to be found in the world, is just. It is, therefore, a central presupposition of Hooker's thought, one which he considered his experience supported and which he thought philosophically 'demonstrable', that there was no complete alienation between God and man, and that every man is capable of reason. And it is reason that exhibits to the human race the existence of God. ^{The world} ~~It~~ would be 'irrational' if it did not. In such a fashion the a posteriori reason for believing in the existence of God are combined with a priori deductions as to his attributes.

1. Eccl. Pol., I, i, 2.

2. Eccl. Pol., I, i, 2.

3. 'The general end of God's external working is the exercise of his most glorious and most abundant virtue.' Eccl. Pol., I, ii, 4. God 'worketh all things *κατὰ τὴν βουλήν τοῦ Θελήματος αὐτοῦ*, not only according to his own will, but 'the Counsel of his own will!' Eccl. Pol., I, ii, 5.

Already, even in regard to God's identity, Hooker has made a distinction that is to play an important part in the Ecclesiastical Polity, that between internal and external. Of God's internal workings little or nothing is known.¹ In his external workings, however, his attributes can be observed from the just regularity to be seen in nature. Not only is the existence of God so 'proved', his attributes, too, are revealed as part and parcel of the fact of his existence.² This entire argument depends for its cogency on the 'natural' view of reality and on the plausibility of the idea of the Great Chain of Being. It is this idea alone which can give a proper account of the rationality and goodness in the world.

What we have in the Ecclesiastical Polity is a conception of God as Reason, as opposed to the doctrine that God is primarily Will. For Hooker, God's Will is always prompted by his Reason: and it is actually this reason which is the lex aeterna which God has set down

1. Eccl. Pol. I, ii, 2.

2. Aquinas' 'proofs' of God's existence are, of course, accepted in Hooker's brief summary of God and his attributes. It is, I think, pointless to go into these arguments since Hooker merely employs their conclusions without argument of his own, and since they have been examined by A. Kenny in his Five Ways, London 1969. Kenny merely examines the arguments with little attention to context. Yet, he admits in the collection of essays edited by him (Aquinas, London 1970) that, although Aquinas was 'uncommonly' aware of the difference between philosophical and theological methodology, he produced much of his best work in philosophy in the course of investigating theological problems. I venture to suggest that much of the intelligibility of his so-called philosophical arguments is dependent upon theological premises.

for Himself to follow.¹ This lex aeterna is the plan of divine wisdom according to which everything is guided to its proper end. This law is the source of all other laws, that is, of the law of natural agents, of celestial law, of divine law and of human law. In all of these the rational nature of God manifests itself.

Knowledge about God (but not of God)² may come from an objective examination of reality and its defining characteristics. In this sense God is a 'natural' person, and the study appropriate to his external workings is natural theology. "God" is a 'natural' expression which had an identifiable meaning. It is not a proper name. 'God' is what may be termed a title. To affirm of some individual that he is God is to affirm that the individual occupies some special position in the universe. His attributes, perfectly rational, perfectly good, omnipotent and omniscient, are necessary truths in regard to this person. God himself cannot be lacking in any of the attributes that constitute his essence; for if he were, he would not be what he is, and this is to say that the law of contradiction would have been violated. This is impossible even in the case of God, who must therefore act in a manner consistent with his own nature. Thus God is absolutely perfect, the most perfect Being, because all imperfection implies the presence of unactualized potentiality. Since a substance in act is real to the extent that the essence of that substance has received existence, it follows that no

1. This does not mean that 'the freedom of the will of God is any whit abated, let or hindered by means of this; because the imposition of this law is his own free and voluntary act'. Eccl. Pol., I, ii, 6.
2. For some discussion of the distinction here see V. Preller, Divine Science and the Science of God, Princeton, 1967, Chapter One.

'part' of God's essence is without existence. God is pure act, the subject of his knowledge is his own essence.

God is by definition the only perfect Being. The rest of the universe is imperfect in that it has not fulfilled its full potentiality.¹ All creatures represent an intermediate stage between absolute perfection and complete actualization at one extreme, and, at the other, that lack of perfection which is purely unactualized potentiality. This picture of reality Hooker sums up thus:

'God alone excepted, who actually and everlastingly is whatsoever he may be, and which cannot hereafter be that which ~~he~~ ^{it} is not; all other things besides 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; and when they are it, they shall be perfecter than now they are. All which perfections are contained under the general name of Goodness. And because there is not in the world any thing whereby another may not some way be made the perfecter, therefore all things that are, are good'.²

Since God is good, existence bears a 'resemblance' or 'likeness' to God. God's attributes are exemplary versions of the attributes possessed by finite things. Men reach whatever natural understanding they have of God's attributes, by removing 'imperfections' that attend these qualities when possessed by finite things. Aquinas himself writes as follows:

'Each being is called good because of the divine goodness, the first exemplar principle as well as the efficient and telic cause of all goodness. Yet it is nonetheless the case that each being is called good because of a likeness of the divine goodness by which it is denominated'.³

1. Eccl. Pol., I, ii, 3.

2. Eccl. Pol., I, v, 1.

3. St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, London, 1964, Part I, Q. 6, A. 4.

Again in another work he remarks:

'Every agent is found to produce effects which resemble it. Hence if the first goodness is the efficient cause of all things, it must imprint its likeness upon things which it produces. Thus each thing is called good because of an intrinsic goodness, impressed upon it, and yet is further denominated good because of the first goodness which is the exemplar and efficient cause of all created goodness'.¹

In short, while the creation is potentially good, God is perfectly good. He exemplifies the concept of goodness. Thus to term God good is to name him as the goal of all rational desire. The criteria of goodness is essentially teleological or 'natural'. For the rational man, without revelation, ostensibly may know what is good, and the point of any natural principle is to achieve the good, to achieve that which alone satisfies desire.

God, then, is the creator of the universe. From Him nature has received existence and essence. Existence is ~~that~~ in virtue of which a substance becomes real. Just as the distinction between existence and essence can be applied to all substances (except God), so also can the distinction between act and potency. Potency may be defined as a possibility that can be actualized. The actualization of a potentiality or set of potentialities is a process of change, a movement which, when completed, results in the substance becoming real. A substance in act is real. This process or realization or actualization is also a process of perfection. 'Degrees of perfection,' then, refers to the degree to which potentialities are actualized.

Substances are not only compounded of essence and existence, potency and act, they are also compounded of matter and form. And yet, the distinction between matter and form is not applicable to all

1. St. Thomas Aquinas, Questiones Disputatae de Veritate, 2 vols. Taurini, 1949, xxi, 4. This passage and the previous one are quoted in N. Pike, God and Timelessness, London, 1970, p. 3.

substances. It is in fact applicable to corporeal substances only. Thus, when a human being is created, in the moment of conception, God creates a soul¹ to inform the incipient body. Human beings are numerically distinct because they have distinct bodies. As matter individuates, so the form is the principle of specification, that is, it determinates the species to which the individual thing is to belong. The form is that which is common to all individuals within a species. It makes them the kind of individuals they are, it gives them their defining characteristics, and it outlines the ends which they cannot but pursue, being the kind of individuals they are.² At a 'philosophical' level a substance is intelligible insofar as it is form.

In sum, 'nature' is the area of rationality and goodness. And the connection between reality and truth is expressed by Aquinas in the sentence '~~En~~s et verum convertuntur'.³ Truth and being are correlated aspects of the world. Truth is perceived by the understanding. Being is in the world. An intellectual judgement can be true or false but is always about that which is or is not. There is as much possibly knowable truth

1. 'Form in other creatures is a thing proportionable unto the the soul in living creatures. Sensible it is not, nor otherwise discernable then only by effects. According to the diversity of inward forms, things of the world are distinguished.' Eccl. Pol., I, iii, 4, n. 31.
2. Thus non-voluntary agents 'do so necessarily observe their certain laws, that as long as they keep those forms which give them their being, they cannot possibly be apt or inclinable to do otherwise than they do; seeing the kinds of their operations are both constantly and exactly framed according to the several ends for which they serve, they themselves in the meanwhile, though doing that which is fit, yet knowing neither what they do, nor why: it followeth that all which they do in this sort proceedeth originally from some agent, as knoweth, appointeth, holdeth up, and even actually frometh the same'. Eccl. Pol., I, iii, 4.
3. St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, London, 1964, ia,16,1.

in the world as there is of actual being in it. A judgement is, therefore, true if there is something real which corresponds to the reality assumed in the judgement. Consequently, the natural principles of reality must be taken into account in any argument that is above the level of substantive law. To ignore these principles is to be convicted necessarily of irrationalism. To consider something as natural is to recommend it as valuable. In this way the doctrine of natural ends finds its way into practical argument. By its very being it must, for the character of nature, insofar as it prescribes what to do, is practical.

(iii)

God understands reality as the product of his Reason. But for man

'only thus much is discerned, that the natural generation and process of all things receiveth order of proceeding from the settled stability of divine understanding. This appointeth unto them their kinds of working'.¹

Ideas, however, may be derived by abstraction, and the intellect may proceed to certain acts of understanding. It will be able to discern that there are firm decrees of God as regards the conduct of life. It will be able to understand that man himself is the creation of a God who speaks to him through law, and that this system of law is readily discernible. In short, mind is the passive receiver of God's precepts and principles. To use Orr's phrase, Hooker's rationalism is 'passive'.²

To be rational is to recognize the structure of reality as it is. It is the divine in man, recognizing God's divinity, reason in him

1. Eccl. Pol., I, ii, 4.

2. R. R. Orr, Reason and Authority: the Thought of William Chillingworth, Oxford, 1967, p. 180.

recognizing rationality. Since mind is the passive receptacle of divine truth, Hooker has little to say on the actual operation in attaining to knowledge of the principles and their application. However, one basic distinction he does make follows from his previous distinction between matter and form. Matter itself gives rise to sensible knowledge which man shares with all natural agents. About sense recognition in general Hooker is vague, but it appears to be knowledge of, or acquaintance with, individual material objects. It is prior to the intellect and is the first experience of a mind which is 'at first as a book, wherein nothing is and yet all things may be imprinted'.¹ And the intellect itself is in some sense dependent on sensory experience, for

'till we grow to some ripeness of years, the soul of man doth only store itself with conceits of things of inferior and more open quality, which afterwards do serve as instruments unto that which is greater; in the meantime above the reach of meaner creatures it ascendeth not'.²

The use of the faculty of reason is the product of maturity for any judgement concerning sensory experiences and the objects of those experiences belongs to the intellect, not to the senses. For instance, differences of time, affirmations and negations, and the law of contradiction, can only be recognized by natural reason.³ So intellect, while not innate, cannot but appear in any normal being at some point, since the rational soul is the form of man's body. But this growth is, however, at the first merely potential, and it is only with the aid of education and of practice that one may come to maturity of judgement.

'Education and instruction are the means, the one by use, the other by precept, to make our natural faculty of reason both the better and sooner able to judge rightly between truth and error, good and evil'.⁴

1. Eccl. Pol., I, vi, 1.

2. Eccl. Pol., I, vi, 3.

3. Eccl. Pol., I, vi, 5.

4. Eccl. Pol., I, vi, 5.

Consequently every adult may (with the exception of those who are innocent or insane¹) grasp certain truths. And with respect to these truths, Hooker sometimes speaks of axioms in the meaning of necessarily true propositions, the contrary of which are inconceivable.² They function as necessary points of departure for further argument.

Now it is a characteristic of the tradition of thought within which Hooker worked, to refer to pagan authors to substantiate their claim that man, by use of his natural reason may attain to an understanding of some structural principles of reality. Hooker quotes, for example, a phrase from Plato's Theaetetus, and he refers 'to that known relation which God hath unto us His children'. Aristotle's judgement about a first cause is drawn into the argument also, and he utilizes Sophocles: 'the law of reason is no child of today's or yesterday's birth, both hath been no man knoweth how long sithence'. From this sprint through classical literature Hooker himself concludes, 'the axioms are in such sort investigable that the knowledge of them is general'.³ He finally turns to the authority of St. Augustine to support this conclusion:

'This was (it seemeth) Saint Augustine's judgement: namely that there are in it- the law of reason - some things which stand as principles universally agreed upon; and that out of these principles, which are in themselves evident, the greatest moral duties we owe towards God or man without any difficulty be concluded'.⁴

1. Eccl. Pol., I, vii, 4.

2. 'The main principles of Reason are in themselves apparent.. For to make nothing evident of itself unto man's understanding were to take away all possibility of knowing anything.' Eccl. Pol., I, viii, 5.

3. Eccl. Pol., I, viii, 7; I, viii, 9.

4. Eccl. Pol., I, viii, 10.

It was in such an eclectic fashion that the world was made one. Natural laws are timelessly true and the fact that they have been recognized by pagan intellectuals confirms this. The natural view of reality was thus supported and subscribed to by the most intelligent men that have had occasion to consider the character and order of experience. It was only those who were directly opposed to the general conclusions of this manner of thought that could not find their way into this tradition. Quotations from, and references to, their work were specifically selected to verify or confirm what was already known to be true. Works that were not readily fitted into this framework were not deliberately destroyed; they were merely forgotten and their tradition allowed to decay.

There was, however, one event which the pagan authors could not confirm, and that was the Revelation of God in his Son Jesus Christ. Despite all that can be stated about reason and the principles it is apparently able to recognize, reason and rational examination cannot unaided discover what they appear to promise. For man's natural inclination to the good and the rational cannot be satisfied without supernatural gifts. 'Nature is no sufficient teacher of what we should do that we may attain unto life everlasting.' ¹ And this idea must affect any 'Philosophy' adopted by the Christian who considers that rational examination may reveal something of God's existence and attributes.

Revelation gives rise to faith. Religious faith is in no way a special kind of knowledge, that is the work of a special mental faculty. The difference between faith and reason is

1. Eccl. Pol., I, xiv, 3.

that faith gives assent to something not because sufficiently moved to do so by the object itself (as it does with reason), but, because moved by some act of will which inclines the intellect more in one direction than in another. The soul thus assents to propositions about an object of faith not because sufficiently determined to do so by the object itself, but because it also inclines to give its assent when told by the Will to do so. The will, in its turn, can then be subject, for example, to the will of God. For natural knowledge, however, no such additional condition is required. It is the known object which alone suffices to determine the intellectual assent to a given proposition.

Yet faith does presuppose natural cognition. An unprepared intellect cannot even begin to understand the Word of God (for this Word is essentially an intelligible Word) and, consequently, it has no grounds for accepting or rejecting the message conveyed in revelation. Thus 'all kinds of knowledge have their certain bounds and limits'.¹ Not even the knowledge provided by direct revelation suffices for all the needs of man. To be sure, there is 'in Scripture no defect' (whatever 'defect' might mean in these circumstances²). From one point of view it is certainly quite correct to make the statement that Scripture possesses sufficiency, as it was later claimed by orthodox theologians.³ However, the sufficiency of Scripture has its proper limits. It is necessary to remember that it is sufficient merely 'unto the end for which it was instituted'. And there can be no doubt concerning that purpose at least. 'The principle intent of Scripture is to deliver the laws of duties supernatural.'⁴

1. Eccl. Pol., I, xiv, 1.

2. Eccl. Pol., I, xiv, 5.

3. Eccl. Pol., I, xiii, 3.

4. Eccl. Pol., I, xiii, 3.

Despite the fact, as Norman Malcolm has it, 'Nothing is put forward in the Old or New Testament as evidence for the existence of God'¹, on Hooker's terms, the Scriptures presuppose that one takes certain things for granted. He considered that they presuppose that the universe is ordered, and that man is entrusted with the natural light of reason and ^{that he} attempts to utilize his potentialities. They presuppose that men actually possess other kinds of knowledge, of the truth of which he is already convinced. If it is realized that this is the case, if the presuppositions of Hooker's thought are accepted, then it must necessarily be understood that Revelation in the main adds new knowledge (not necessarily a new kind of knowledge) to that which is already known. Revelation, in short, presupposes the faculty of reason and its achievement, and one of its achievements is 'proofs' of God's existence.

What we have here, then, is a work of natural theology as opposed to 'non-natural theology'.² Not only does natural theology discuss the concept of God and his attributes, but the arguments propounded prove his existence. The God of natural theology and Revelation are thus considered in some way to be identical. Knowledge about God is a presupposition of knowledge of God. Thus statements made about God are not merely theological, they are natural in that God-statements may be verified by an appeal to nature. And it is 'nature' which gives reality to philosophical arguments. Philosophical arguments are not merely self-supporting (i.e. coherent) they correspond to reality. God's existence is

1. N. Malcolm, 'Is it a Religious Belief that God Exists?' in John Hick Faith and the Philosophers, London, 1966.
2. A term appropriated from Garèth B. Mathews, 'Theology and Natural Theology', Journal of Philosophy, vol. LXI, 1964.

a 'hard' fact of experience.¹ Such a mode of argumentation is opposed by non-natural theology. This style of thought has no use at all for 'natural' argument to justify religious experience. To employ an example quoted by Matthews, Luther in his Small Catechism writes: 'I believe that by my own reason or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him'. This is similar to the position of Calvin. Or at least, such a presupposition constitutes the beginning of Calvin's thinking. Theological statements are legitimate statements which may be justified by the appropriate criteria. And these are not 'natural'. Hooker's quarrel with the Calvinist/Presbyterian position stems from a difference of opinion as to the proper justification for theological statements in general, and what appropriate criteria are in regard to the present dispute in particular.

While reality, for Hooker, is one, because of God's rationality and goodness, distinctions of kind may be 'discerned' in it. And for his argument these distinctions are important. His opponents' chief failure, from his point of view, was that they did not achieve a distinction between, nor state the complementary relationship of, nature and supernature, reason and faith. The exclusive appeal of the Presbyterians was a negation of reason and natural law (and therefore of God's rationality and goodness) as was not permitted according to Hooker's picture of the order of creation. According to him, the Presbyterians' confusion of the orders of nature and supernature had no basis in reality. Calvinism was based upon a great error of judgement. Nothing in experience corresponded to its beliefs. This was the root mistake from which all manner of dangerous occurrences have ensued in the past and might do so in the future.

1. A term employed by Marilyn McCord Adams, 'Is the Existence of God a "Hard" Fact?', Philosophical Review, vol. LXXVI, 1967.

8.

REASON AND CONDUCT

The idiom of thought normally employed by Hooker may be characterized as a system of description. Within this system moral judgements appear as a sub-class of statements of fact. Such an ascription of certainty to moral judgements follows from the fact that Hooker relates man's action to a revealed objective which overrides the uncertainties of his historical existence. The absolute principles of nature give direction to human judgement where otherwise there would be unmitigated doubt. In short, what we have in Hooker's work is a body of prescriptions posing as a system of description.

It would be out of place in this thesis to enter into the incoherence of the attempt to derive moral principles from so-called natural facts. What is to be established is the important position that this idiom of thought attains in Hooker's argument. For, if one accepts that there are moral principles governing conduct, which have a 'natural' force, it follows that in a dispute of the character of that in which Hooker and the Presbyterians were involved, only one, or none, of the participants could be correct in his judgement. For Hooker, genuine moral disagreement between honest and intelligent people, in which there is no certain point of reference which may finally settle the dispute, appears an impossibility. Moral disagreement is a consequence of miscalculation and ignorance on one or both sides, and ignorance of the proper principles governing conduct is precisely what Hooker accused the Presbyterians of being

guilty of.

In the first part of the present chapter the governing characteristic of Hooker's argument will guide our investigation of his idea of man's essence. In the latter half of the chapter we proceed to an examination of the relationship of man's supreme end to his relationships with his fellow creatures, and consider to what extent Hooker believed man may attain unto his '~~true~~' nature in his imperfect state.

According to Hooker, man's teleological end drives or pulls him into action. Man's natural desires lead him to fulfilment.¹ Although man has been corrupted by the Fall, his capacity to recognize that such fulfilment may be attained has been diminished but slightly. For despite his remarks on the catastrophic effects of the Fall (on which he is, of course, necessarily vague) the impression is conveyed by Hooker that man, by use of his reason, may achieve a measure of happiness and fulfilment. Those very principles ordained by God, that illuminate the universe in its regular motion, have not at all been overthrown by such a local event as the Fall of Man.² Man's good, then, is

'that wherein the highest degree of our perfection consist, that which being once attained unto there can rest nothing

1. 'Everything naturally necessarily doth desire the utmost good and greatest perfection whereof Nature hath made it capable, even so man. Our felicity therefore being the object and accomplishment of our desire, we cannot choose but wish and covet it.' *Eccl. Pol.*, I, viii, 1.
2. As Hooker complained to his opponents in a note on 'A Christian Letter': 'You have heard that man's nature is corrupt, his reason blind, his will perverse. Whereupon under colour of condemning corrupt Nature, you condemn Nature, and so the rest'. *Eccl. Pol.*, V, App. I.

further to be desired; and therefore with it our souls are fully content and satisfied, in that they have they rejoice and thirst for no more'.¹

All other ends are derived from this one end, which is the final cause of all activity and being. Both efficient and final causes are, however, necessary links in the chain of experience. Without efficient causes man would not exist in a world of possibilities. Without a final end there would be no direction in activity.² Hooker concludes, firstly, that if there were no final cause, such a lack would mean that everything that man attempted would be a vain gesture.³ Secondly, man's desire for his good in and for itself is infinite. Now, since God is the only infinite good to which man can subscribe, and since 'desire tendeth unto union with that which it desireth',⁴ union with God is man's final end, even though he cannot attain to it on earth.

'Happiness is that estate whereby we attain, so far as possibly may be attained, the full possession of that which simply for itself is to be desired, and containeth in it after an eminent sort the contention of our desires, the highest degree of all our perfection.'⁵

1. Eccl. Pol., I, xi, 1.

2. 'If everything were to be desired for some other without any stint, there could be no certain end proposed unto our actions, we should go we know not whither.' Eccl. Pol., I, xi, 1.

3. Eccl. Pol., I, xi, 1.

4. Eccl. Pol., I, xi, 1.

5. Eccl. Pol., I, xi, 1.

The desire for God, Hooker assures his readers, is perfectly natural. It is part of man's end, even in the condition of imperfection, to seek to return to God. 'And is it probable', Hooker asks, 'that God should frame the hearts of all men so desirous of that which no man may obtain?' The question is merely rhetorical, for it is an axiom of Nature that natural desire cannot utterly be frustrated.¹ That nature can be frustrated is an event that could not possibly happen. Such a proposition is unthinkable, or, at least, cannot be entertained for long, if the presuppositions of Hooker's argument are accepted. Indeed, the whole point of enclosing one's presuppositions in a circular argument is lost, if the other positions are considered at their face value.

In general, then, man seeks a triple perfection.² Three ends compose his harmonious triad. It is true that man is a corrupted creature, and there is, thereby, no natural path to salvation. Man, therefore, has had revealed to him a supernatural way to salvation. This places on man the supernatural duties of faith, hope and charity.³ But

1. Eccl. Pol., I, xi, 4.

2. Eccl. Pol., I, xi, 4.

3. 'Laws therefor concerning these things are supernatural both in respect of the manner of delivering them which is divine; and also in regard of the things delivered, which are such as have not in nature any cause from which they flow, but were by voluntary appointment of God ordained besides the course of nature, to rectify nature's obliquity withal.' Eccl. Pol., I, xi, 6.

'when supernatural duties are necessarily exacted, natural duties are not rejected as meaningless'.¹ This judgement is directly contrary to the Calvinist position which, in Hooker's view, tended to neglect the moral aspects of natural activity. In his mind, however, nature was not corrupt in its entirety. It still retained its ability to convey truth.

Hooker summarizes his own argument for the threefold division of man in the following manner:

'We see, therefore, that our sovereign good is derived naturally; that God the author of that natural desire had appointed natural means whereby to fulfil it; that man having utterly disabled his nature unto those means hath others revealed from God; and hath received from Heaven a law to teach him how that which is desired naturally must now supernaturally be attained.'²

That there is no rigid division between revelation and nature is supported by Scripture itself, for many natural principles are there included which 'teacheth such natural duties as could not by light of nature easily have been known.'³

Ultimately, to go to the Scriptures to clarify certain natural principles is an indication of how Christians determine the status of even the most general principles of experience. Such principles may, indeed, be subscribed to by upholders of different creeds, by men of faith and by men of no faith at all. In Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, however, these principles are acceptable only if they do not conflict with the central tenets of Christianity (such as Hooker regarded them). The world, consequently, may be viewed as a reflection of

1. Eccl. Pol., I, xii, 1.

2. Eccl. Pol., I, xiii, 3.

3. Eccl. Pol., I, xiii, 3.

God's character. It derives its rationality from him, and the distinctions we may discern within the world are, therefore, natural, necessary and real. To ignore them is to declare oneself against the sacred and rational identity of experience. By such an action a breach between man's understanding of the world and the 'true' principles of reality would be opened, and through it the world would inevitably sink into uncertainty.

The notion that man's true end is to be with God is an axiom of experience, and not to be discovered by consulting what is good for a group or community. There is, however, no absolute distinction between man's final end and his conduct among his fellows. What is morally desirable may be 'deduced' from man's supreme good, and this necessarily carries with it implications for relationships between men. Men know, therefore, that they must love others as they themselves. In nature, that is before God, they are all equal. This desire to be esteemed and loved by his equals imposes upon man 'a natural duty of bearing to them-ward fully the like affection.'¹ The principles governing this relationship of equals are, of course, naturally known.²

Hooker does not describe that which is in a natural condition as being in a state of nature, but he might well have done so. His aim was to find a criterion outside changing historical circumstances, against which to judge the 'natural' status of political orders and moral relationships. This atemporal condition he takes as co-existent with man in history so that there

1. Eccl. Pol., I, viii, 8.

2. Among others (which Hooker does not go on to name, are these: 'That because we would take no harm, we must therefore do none'; 'that sith we would not be in anything extremely dealt with, we must ourselves avoid all extremity in our dealings'; 'that from all violence and wrong we are utterly to abstain'. Eccl. Pol., I, viii, 8. These 'principles' are taken directly from the Code Justinian.

is a structure of 'facts' that could be referred to in any dispute that involved first principles. Yet the moral principles often enunciated (such as those mentioned in footnote 2 on the previous page) impose themselves, if at all, only because they are, either now or at the time of Hooker's writing, very controversial. Only at an elementary level can moral disagreement be explained by saying that one person apprehends the good and its concomitant truths, and another does not. Despite the formal character of his argument, however, Hooker is not concerned to explain moral and political disagreement but to settle it as best he knows how. Such a task, in his mind, involved his pointing to moral facts evident in nature. These facts must be apprehended by reason and what reason apprehends are indeed these very facts. Reason is, in effect, a beam that appears to 'illuminate' the moral facts, but does not explain them except in the simplest terms. It is, in this sense, dumb, but not blind. So 'goodness is seen with the eye of the understanding. And the light of that eye is reason'.¹ It is this metaphor of sight that appears to have the great capacity to suggest the ostensible objectivity of what is known.²

Hooker, therefore, working in the tradition he does, finds it no difficult matter to speak of 'discovering goodness' and of 'the natural way to goodness'. Such remarks as these indicate that Hooker considered that his investigation had some 'philosophical' force. Since experience is guided by reason, this must necessarily be of great importance to religious, moral and political belief. It is easy to see the apparent polemical force of this argument vis-a-vis

1. Eccl. Pol., I, vii, 2.

2. The metaphor would seem to go back at least as far as Plato. See W. H. Walsh, Metaphysics, London 1966, pp. 27-33.

the Calvinist/Presbyterian position. Reason, because it is the imprint of the divine on man, can and ought to be consulted both in theory and in practice during man's historical existence. It is the proper guide to the discovery of that law according to which man must regulate the conduct of his natural life if he wishes to avoid sin. Thus the necessary presuppositions of Hooker's notion of moral conduct comprise those duties encompassed in the prescriptions of the 'law of reason'.¹

The principles governing conduct, or 'the laws of well-doing' are the 'dictates of right reason'.² These principles of moral conduct are, according to Hooker, either known, or found out, because they refer to different modes of approaching the laws of reason. It is in history that man comes to know these laws, although in fact he cannot fail to reach a minimum knowledge of them. If this were not so, the teleological explanation of man's conduct that Hooker gives would be entirely irrelevant and completely nonsensical. Moreover, because moral principles are that which reason discloses, they are not only rational but also capable of attainment. For the will does not seek merely that which is good but also that which is possible.³

Reason, then, apprehends, both the good and the possible. The will itself 'inclines' (to use Hooker's term) to these things. Just as the will does not seek that which is unattainable, so reason 'dictates' that which may be desired. For 'evil as evil

1. Hooker's definition of this moral law is succinct and circular. 'The nature of Goodness ... being ample, a law is properly that which Reason in such sort defineth to be good that it must be done.' Eccl. Pol., I, vii, 8.
2. Eccl. Pol., I, vii, 4.
3. 'Let Reason teacheth impossibility in any thing, and the Will of Man doth let it go; a thing impossible it doth not affect, the impossibility thereof being manifest.' Eccl. Pol., I, vii, 5.

cannot be desired'. If it should happen or become apparent that that which once was sought was really evil, the cause could have been nothing but 'the goodness which is or seemeth to be joined with it'.¹ In conditions of imperfection and indeterminacy this is a frequent occurrence, for 'higher reason' does not (indeed need not) always enter into the nuances of moral conduct. Hence it may occur that

'custom inuring the mind by long practice, and so leaving there a sensible impression, prevaiileth more than reasonable persuasion what may so ever. Reason therefore may rightly discern the thing which is good, and yet the will of man not incline itself thereunto, as oft as the prejudice of sensible experience doth oversway'.²

This, however, is not a matter for excuse. It is mere laziness that we may prefer a less good to a greater.³ It is true, Hooker affirms, that the path to truth is full of pitfalls. Yet despite the corruption inherent in man's nature the diligent search for the good must continue. It has always been a fact, as Hooker's frequent citations from pagan philosophers attempt to prove, that man's felicity 'being the object and accomplishment of [his] desire, [he] cannot choose but wish and covet it'.⁴

Apart from revelation, the two ways of attaining to knowledge of the dictates governing conduct are by use of higher reason and by engaging in ordinary moral conduct itself. The first is the less fallible; indeed, it may be considered to be 'infallible' in its own sphere since it may penetrate to knowledge of the 'causes' of the goodness. To penetrate to 'causes' is to disclose how determinate reality is. The character of reality is best described by the natural idiom of

1. Eccl. Pol., I, vii, 6.

2. Eccl. Pol., I, vii, 6.

3. Eccl. Pol., I, vii, 7.

4. Eccl. Pol., I, viii, 1.

thought, The latter is uniquely appropriate to the nature of experience. The second, which proceeds by observation of 'signs' or 'tokens' of goodness, is by far the most common form of knowledge. Here the most certain sign of evident goodness is 'if the general persuasion of all who so account it'.¹ But traditions of conduct in a 'natural' world are not self justifying, and in these conditions

'a common received error is never utterly overthrown, till such time as we go from signs to causes, and shew some manifest root or fountain thereof common unto all, whereby it may clearly appear how it hath come to pass that so many have been overseen. In which case surmises and slight probabilities will not serve, because the universal consent of men is the perfectest and strongest in this kind, which comprehended only the signs and tokens of goodness'.²

This must be the case for, while all men do not actually attain to clear knowledge of the causes of goodness, they are commonly capable of an adequate understanding of moral conduct. They are capable of judging what to do and of giving reasons for their actions. In Hooker's judgement, indeed, 'whensoever the judgements of all men generally or for the most part run one and the same way', there must be an underlying reason for this tendency.³ The justification for this tendency is provided by 'nature', by the principles inherent in a rationally ordered universe.

Since he had earlier characterized his age as 'full of tongue and weak of brain', Hooker is under some compunction to investigate the activity of the higher understanding in order to counteract the drift of his previous remarks, the emphasis of which was on the reasonableness of ordinary moral conduct.

1. Eccl. Pol., I, viii, 3.

2. Eccl. Pol., I, viii, 3.

3. Indeed, 'the general and perpetual voice of man is as the sentence of God himself. For that which all men have at all times learned, Nature herself must needs have taught'.
Eccl. Pol., I, viii, 3.

Hooker by this manoeuvre attempts to show that 'philosophy' is a viable activity and may have fruitful conclusions. Such a move he must make, for, on his own terms, Book One of the Ecclesiastical Polity may be considered to be a 'philosophical' work. This investigation is impelled by his particular intention and the conclusion he hopes to draw is that certain traditions of activity are not contrary to, and indeed epitomize, natural conduct.

Knowledge of causes, then, is certain and infallible. This knowledge is attained by the 'understanding' whose manner and method Hooker is investigating. The understanding may be taken to mean that part of man that is capable of discovering as far as it may in man's fallen state the truths of nature.¹ Amidst the diversity of the world the understanding may attain to a knowledge of the natural moral condition of man in the setting of his divine purpose. In consequence of observations that the best things, unhindered, produce the best operations, reason recognizes itself as the best part of man. From this discovery various axioms, as Hooker frequently affirms, may be deduced.²

There is, then, a sense in which higher reason may verify the precepts of common moralities for traditions of conduct are

1. Hooker, to my mind, is not at all consistent in the use of the term 'the understanding'. At some points he equates it (as noted) with higher reason. At other times he employs it generally to cover the whole of man's rational faculties that is, including moral conduct. This confusion, however, has a context, for it will be recalled that man seeks a triple perfection, spiritual, sensual and intellectual. 'Philosophy' and moral conduct are in fact a subdivision of the intellectual area of man's nature. And since 'higher reason' merely recognizes the true ends of man, it is hardly to be expected that Hooker can maintain and subscribe to a rigid division between the different aspects of the understanding.
2. 'Within the compass of which laws (of Reason) we do not only comprehend whatsoever may be easily known to belong to the duty of all men, but even whatsoever may possibly be known to be of that quality, so that the same be by necessary consequence deduced out of clear and manifest principles.'
Eccl. Pol., I, viii, 11.

not entirely self-justifying. According to Hooker, higher reason can and does act in the manner of a doctor examining a sick patient. Reason by a process of 'deduction' may recognize whether certain ways of acting are good or bad. In this way it may diagnose and cure moral 'diseases'.¹ This process is difficult and Hooker excuses himself from too deep an examination because of the character of the present age. Nonetheless some investigation is necessary for his present purpose, which is ostensibly a critical examination of the condition of England.² He, however, again reiterates his opinion that care is necessary when scrutinizing existing law and asking reasons for that which is in being.³

In discussing the ways in which the precepts of nature are known or found out, Hooker is vague. He appears to be moving continuously from man in his natural condition to man in the present conditions of imperfection. This move confuses or

1. Medical analogies here may possibly owe something to Aristotle. For their importance in Aristotle see G.E.R. Lloyd 'The Role of Medical and Biological Analogies in Aristotle's Ethics', *Phronesis*, vol. XIII, 1968.
2. The most infallible way to reason's Laws is 'so hard that all shun it and had rather walk as men do in the dark by haphazard, than tread so long and intricate mazes for knowledge's sake. As therefore physicians are many times forced to leave such methods of curing as themselves know to be fittest, and being overruled by their patient's impatience are fain to try the best they can, in taking that way of cure which the cured will yield unto; in like sort, considering how the case doth stand with this present age full of tongue and weak of brain, behold me yield unto the stream thereof; into the causes of goodness we will not any curious or deep inquiry; to touch them now and then it shall be sufficient, when they so near at hand that easily they may be conceived without any far-removed discourse: that way we are contented to prove, which being the worse in itself, is notwithstanding now by reason of common imbecility the fitter and likelier to be brooked.' *Eccl. Pol.*, I, viii, 2.
3. 'And herein that of Theophrastus is true, "They that seek a reason of all things do utterly overthrow reason".'
Eccl. Pol., I, viii, 5.

tends to confuse man's potential capacities with his actual activity. It, in consequence, becomes difficult to discern when Hooker is discussing which. Moreover, the distinction between 'signs' and 'causes' is not clearly explained, indeed it is hardly explained at all but merely stated. From Hooker's previous remarks in regard to man seeking a three-fold perfection, one might have expected this distinction between signs and causes to be elaborated in conjunction with the division within intellectual activity. But such a distinction is hardly investigated at all, and it is often blurred by Hooker's use of the term 'understanding'. In the end, it is difficult to sustain an absolute distinction, on Hooker's premises, between 'speculation' and moral conduct. For within nature there is not (nor can there be) any absolute division into modes of activity. In experience rational and moral facts can hardly be distinguished into their modal components. For Hooker, philosophy or speculative reason leads not merely to the truth for its own sake but also to moral perfection. Philosophy and morality, consequently, slide almost imperceptibly into each other.¹

Although the Fall has dimmed his capabilities, we may conclude that the moral and speculative capacities are co-existent in man both naturally and historically. By the exercise of these capacities man has discovered his natural duties. These duties are all means of bringing man into closer relationship with God. Even in history the duties of conduct are in good part, if by no means solely, means to happiness in eternity. 'We labour to

1. Locke, too, appears to have had difficulty, despite formal separation, between 'knowledge' and 'opinion', in keeping to this demarcation. See the remarks of Richard Aschcraft, 'Faith and Knowledge in Locke's Philosophy', in John Locke: Problems and Perspectives, ed. J.W. Yolton, Cambridge, 1969, pp. 208-214.

eat, and we eat to live, and the good we do is as seed sown with reference to a future harvest.'¹ Such is the finite character of experience that divine happiness issues in part as a reward for 'such duties performed as are rewardable'.²

This does not mean that moral conduct is directly dependent on speculative reason for its implementation. Potentially, of course, man does have complete knowledge of the moral principles that constitute his end. Indeed, some of these, as we have seen, are and have been long known. Hooker suggests the following marks by which they are known:

'Such as keep them resemble most lively in their voluntary actions that very manner of working which Nature herself doth necessarily observe in the course of the whole world. The works of Nature are all behoveful, beautiful, without superfluity or defect; even so theirs, if they be framed according to that which the law of Reason teacheth. Secondly, those laws are investigable by Reason, without the help of Revelation, supernatural and divine. Finally, in such sort they are investigable, that the knowledge of them is general, the world hath always been acquainted with them; according to that which one in Sophocles observeth concerning a branch of this law, "It is no child of today's or yesterday's birth, but hath been no man knoweth how long sithence". It is not agreed upon by one, or two or few, but by all'.³

He, however, proceeds to warn that we should not understand such statements, 'as if every particular man in the whole world did know and confess whatsoever the law of Reason doth contain'.⁴ Rather we are to understand them ideally (or, as Hooker would have it, naturally) as that 'this law is such that being proposed no man can reject it as unreasonable and unjust'.⁵ It is thus not necessary to know it 'infallibly' before being able to act correctly. But the effort to bring into closer contact

1. Eccl. Pol. I, xi, 1.

2. Eccl. Pol., I, xi, 5.

3. Eccl. Pol., I, viii, 9.

4. Eccl. Pol., I, viii, 9.

5. Eccl. Pol., I, viii, 9.

what he has to say about 'causes' with his remarks on 'signs' is indicative of the fact that even the reasonableness of ordinary moral conduct depends ultimately upon the natural setting of experience. In any dispute the ultimate court of appeal are the natural principles of reality. They do, or should, give certain judgement.

While, then, so much depends upon the implicit reasonableness of ordinary morality (as we shall see), Hooker is not willing to forgo the apparent usefulness of natural principles in his present dispute. Clearly it was of great tactical use for him to state that the Calvinists have not apprehended the truth while he has. However, Hooker would demand more from his principles than that, and this is implied by the use of such words as 'proof', 'demonstration', and 'axiom'. Thus it could be the case, for instance, that both parties to a moral and political dispute could accept the principles of reason in good faith and yet differ in the way they 'judge' particular goods and in the manner in which they identify good things or right actions. Even here in theory it is still possible to arrive at the 'correct' answer. However, it would appear to be necessary that in order to make out a convincing case for the compelling moral authority of natural law, it would have to be shown that some ways of choosing particular goods are self-contradictory or invalid in some sense. There is no indication of how a 'demonstration' of a philosophical character would show this. In any case, with his distinction between necessity and indifference, and with his emphasis on institutional authority, such an occasion need hardly have been considered by Hooker. It would have been confusing to his purpose.

Hooker, then, beginning from a sketch of his natural

position (which in fact does not have the 'natural' force he claims for it) proceeds to castigate the Presbyterians as irrational and arrogant. We may regard this measure as a tactic in practical argument, although Hooker would scarcely subscribe to such an interpretation. It is because we are at the level of practical argument that it does not matter too much whether or not it may be 'demonstrated' that particular actions may be deduced from first principles. It is enough that these principles are acted upon in the 'correct' manner. It is still necessary to know what the correct manner is, but this is a question that is settled in Hooker's judgement not merely by personal choice but by various institutional authorities. The implications of such a judgement in particular areas of experience Hooker attempts to point out in the bulk of his work.

Finally, it may be suggested that, when he considers moral conduct and not merely the moral duties enjoined by the law of Reason, Hooker is writing in that idiom of thought referred to by Oakeshott as the morality of communal ties. Hooker emphasises in the main body of his work that human beings, in regard to external particulars, are each nothing but members of a community, either of Christendom itself, or more specifically of the realm of England. Though there may be perhaps only a limited opportunity for individuals to reveal themselves as different in social mores or in the search for truth, this restriction may be considered no bad state of affairs. For in less limited conditions it may become dangerous when individuals of little intelligence but of large ideas take it upon themselves to interpret the Scriptures in their particular fashion. Hooker warns against

'relying upon the bare conceit of eternal election ... to build upon God's election if we keep not ourselves to the way he hath appointed for men to walk, is but a

self-deceiving vanity'.¹

Good conduct in Hooker's view is to be understood as proper participation in the slowly changing, but nonetheless natural activities of a society. So what approximates most to 'nature' must be done, and in the end 'what ought to be done is indistinguishable from what is done; art appears as nature'.²

Rashly to repudiate the achievements of time (as, in Hooker's judgement, the Presbyterians were doing) inevitably introduces increasing uncertainty into the world. This, indirectly, has the effect of seemingly undermining the principles of nature which, while doing no such thing, had the effect of encouraging political disorder.

1. Eccl. Pol., V, lx, 3.

2. M. Oakeshott, Rationalism in Politics, London 1962, p.249.

9.

NATURAL LAW AND POLITICAL SOCIETY

In this chapter I propose to examine Hooker's notion of political society in terms of its origins and purported role in experience. Again we find Hooker moving frequently from the general to the historical level in an effort to justify the authority of the Elizabethan regime. This particular regime is seen against a background of rational law and 'natural' political society. For political society itself is an aspect of the natural setting of experience, and man is, therefore, a political being. It is rational to recognize the necessity of political action and consent to its application.¹

There is, however, in the Ecclesiastical Polity an initial ambivalence to the natural status of political society. For the necessity of political authority is a direct result of evil. Man in his fallen state finds it difficult to keep to the direct path leading to goodness. He is slothful in the pursuit of the good and not disposed to recognize it where it reveals itself. Rewards and punishments, consequently, are necessary to quicken man's pursuit of the good and to lessen wilful evil. And 'rewards and punishments do always presuppose something willing done well or evil'.² While, then, it is the notion of the 'naturalness' of political society that preserves an essential continuity between natural and political man, Hooker

1. 'Forasmuch as we are not ourselves sufficient to furnish ourselves with competent store of things needful for such a life as our nature doth desire, a life fit for the dignity of man; therefore to supply these defects and imperfections which in us living single and solely by ourselves, we are naturally induced to seek communion and fellowship with others.' Eccl. Pol., I, x, 1.

2. Eccl. Pol., I, ix, 1.

finds it necessary to postulate an original historical condition to take into account the notion of the origin of politics in evil. This original historical condition shows man at one stage to have been without political organization. Indeed, man's mundane history may be divided into two periods. First, there is the stage from the Fall to the setting up of civil societies, and secondly, the period from this time onward. The origin of political society is to be explained both 'naturally' and historically.

Natural human wants induce men to seek and enter into political society. It is this latter arrangement which enables them to pursue their happiness with fewer impediments, and in a divine universe the most important actions in a man's experience are those that concern the exercise of religious choice. Nevertheless, 'inasmuch as religious life presupposeth life; inasmuch as to live virtuously it is impossible except we live',¹ it is necessary to remove penury and to supply the implements of life. For this, of course, political society is not strictly necessary. The time between the Fall and the stage of political society, however, was characterized not only by sociableness and inventiveness, but also by malice, sin and violence. And if

'when there was but as yet one only family in the world, no means of instruction human or divine could prevent effusion',²

multiplication of the human species likewise increased the fighting and the bloodshed. In general it was such a time 'wherein there were not above eight persons righteous living upon the face of the earth'.³

1. Eccl. Pol., I, x, 2.

2. Eccl. Pol., I, x, 3.

3. Eccl. Pol., I, x, 3.

In such an uncertain state men necessarily had to defend themselves by any means at their disposal. Such individual efforts, however, were destructive of their purpose, and it dawned upon them that

'Howsoever men may seek their own commodity, yet if this were done with injury unto others it was not to be suffered, but by all men and by all good means withstood; finally they knew that no man might in reason take upon him to determine his own right, according to his own determination proceed in maintenance thereof, inasmuch as every man is towards himself and them whom he greatly affected partial; and therefore that strifes and troubles would be endless, except they gave their common consent all to be ordered by some person whom they should agree upon'.¹

In spite of man's natural rationality and sociableness, Hooker at this point postulates a growth of rationality as man is driven by external circumstances so acute that reason eventually comes to recognize what nature discloses. With the foundation of political societies a new stage of history begins.

The actual foundation of political society Hooker characterizes in a well-known passage:

'Two foundations there are which bear up all public societies the one, a natural inclination whereby all men desire sociable life and fellowship; the other an order expressly or secretly agreed upon touching the manner of their union in living together'.²

To term, as some have done, the notion contained in these remarks a social contract is hardly helpful at all except to those who deal in labels. Moreover, to elevate the nuances of this notion into a doctrine and then transfer the meaning of this doctrine to other statements that appear to be similar to it is positively misleading and is a product of unhistorical thinking. Such doctrines provide the occasion for extended argument postulated upon historical mistakes, but it is a minor merit of a book or a doctrine that it is subject to interesting misinterpretations. However, the important point to notice in regard

1. Eccl. Pol., I, x, 4.

2. Eccl. Pol., I, x, 1.

to Hooker's statements is their context. This context is both 'natural' and historical. The first statement of the previous quotation takes as its context the natural arrangement of human capacities and character. The second statement is a historical complement to this natural setting of man. The actual choice of a particular society becomes not merely a capricious or strictly historical event, but depends upon the natural context. And

'The latter [referring to the actual agreement to form a political society] is that which we call the law of a Commonwealth, the very soul of a politic body, the parts whereof are by law animated, held together, and set on work in such actions, as the common good requireth'.¹

On the question of how the general desire for political society aids one to choose a particular political arrangement, Hooker is silent. Moreover, he modifies the teleological and space-bound 'constitutionalism' embedded in the previous remarks quite significantly in Book Eight of his work. The actual foundation of political society appears to refer to one time and place and cannot be repeated. Thus this natural and trans-historical setting for the origin of political activity is pushed farther into the background in the tactical pursuit of his practical ends.

The 'natural' status of political societies derives from their capacity to serve as instruments for men's efforts to their end for which God created them. All governments are potentially capable of generating desirable conditions for this pursuit. Consequently, there are various types of government from which a collection of individuals or families may 'choose' for there is no theoretically superior form of government. It is probable, Hooker suggests, that patriarchial

1. Eccles. Pol., I, x, 1.

government with rule by father-kings was the first to be instituted since political societies when first formed were collections of households and the title of father/king transferred to the head of a group of households. This is not, however, the only type of government and the 'inconveniences of one kind have caused sundry others to be devised'.¹ Again, after the 'discovery' of political society as a rational aspect of experience, Hooker modifies this natural context and assumes a variety of political achievement in time. This achievement in government, however, Hooker still concludes to be a matter of deliberate 'choice' for

'all public regiment of what kind soever seemeth evidently to have risen from deliberate advice, consultation, and composition between men, judging it convenient and behoveful'.²

In short, any decision as to political arrangement is dependent on the recognition that political society is a necessary aspect of existing in conditions of imperfection. Political achievement is not merely of capricious character. On the natural level it is a matter of rational choice. Government is necessary because of the corruption of man's nature and

'to bring things into the first cause they were in, and utterly to take away all kind of public government in the world, were apparently to overturn the whole world'.³

From the foregoing examination we may conclude that what we have in Book One of the Ecclesiastical Polity in regard to an explanation of the origin of political society is an attempt to fuse two contradictory views about politics and the origin of political activity. On the one hand, we have the Epicurean doctrine that the origin of government may be seen as a response to the pressures of man's external circumstances: man as a

1. Ecccl. Pol., I, x, 4.

2. Ecccl. Pol., I, x, 4.

3. Ecccl. Pol., I, x, 4.

solitary individual is too weak to cope with his environment and needs physical protection. On the other hand, the Aristotelian and Stoic explanation points to man's natural sociableness as the reason for political society. Combined, of course, with these classical explanations is the idea of the Fall which is in line with the Epicurean emphasis on external circumstances. Man's need to be driven in such fashion becomes a sign of deparavity and imperfection.

Hooker would seem to regard the Aristotelian or 'natural' idea of the sociability of man as a necessary but not a sufficient condition of man's seeking to form some kind of society. What makes political society a historical reality is the Fall of Man and the corruption of his nature. In a sense, the mediating concept between the necessary and sufficient conditions is that of consent, for 'impossible it is that any should have complete lawful power, but by consent of men, or immediate appointment of God'.¹ It is noticeable that, while it may be realized that political society is necessary, consent is still required for the actual setting up of particular societies. Hooker's concept of consent (if it may so be called, though it is hardly elaborated) is an idea of how individuals become subject to political obligation and how legitimate political societies arise. It is not in any sense whatsoever (and we have seen this already) a notion of how government ought to be organized, nor does it describe or identify a particular type of political arrangement. Consent is a rational aspect of the order of nature, it is a rational assent to the principles embedded in nature. Man is thus placed in a position where he cannot deny 'but that the law of Nature doth require of necessity some kind of regiment'.² Political obligation

1. Eccl. Pol., I, x, 4.

2. Eccl. Pol., I, x, 4.

is, consequently, a rational deduction based on the necessary principles of human existence, it is an element of the human condition.

The Ecclesiastical Polity is, however, even in the book that merely purports to seek to display the truth about experience in general, a specifically directed work. It is neither a set of instructions nor a crib on how to institute legal political societies or preserve them from their inception. Rather, it is an abridgement of a particular religious and political tradition. It was intended to bring out the implications of an existing religious and political society. It thereby acted as a condemnation of other views, and what Hooker was attacking in particular was a mistaken assault by a minority on the accepted conception of English society. This appears to be implicit in his discussion of consent. For he passes over quickly from talking about the notion of consent in initiating political societies to an examination of how this notion is relevant to existing communities.

All laws, Hooker suggests, are made by public approbation or consent. There are a number of ways in which this can be done. It can be done in person by 'voice, sign or act or by a representative as in parliaments, councils and the like assemblies although we be not personally ourselves present'.¹ This is just as binding as consent in person. There are other ways, too, which are not so apparent. For instance, 'that which hath been received long sithence and is custom now established, we keep as a law which we may not transgress'.² On how this idea of the value of traditional and 'tacit'

1. Eccles. Pol., I, x, 8.

2. Eccles. Pol., I, x, 8.

acceptance is related to the notion of consent to form a political society in general, Hooker does not explicitly comment. How it can be so is difficult to say. Yet Hooker appears to equate consent in general with acceptance in particular. It would seem that because political society is necessary to human existence and man in his full rationality recognizes this, consent to being a member of a particular society may be considered as entailed in living in it.

Assent in particular, however, need not consciously be a 'deduction' from such first principles until it seems that a necessary norm of political association has been violated. It is then that the notion of consent in general may be seen to take its proper place as an aspect of the consideration of necessary principles. When Hooker remarks that the Presbyterians have not received general consent for their radical projects, he means, in effect, that no necessary principle governing political association has been broken. Their radical arguments are, therefore, inappropriate.

This conclusion follows from Hooker's opinion that English society is a legitimate political society and the authority vested in the Crown has not been misused at all. That is the argument directed against the Presbyterians. In the light of experience's 'natural' context they do not have rational assent to their programme.

The idea of general assent to political society and the historical growth of authority and obligation in a particular society are two different notions and operate at different levels. Yet Hooker endeavours to combine them in the following manner:

'.... sith men naturally have no full and perfect power to command whole politic multitudes of men, therefore utterly without our consent we could in such sort be at no man's commandment living. And to be commanded we do consent, when that society whereof we are part hath at any time before consented, without revoking the same after by the like universal agreement. Wherefore as any man's deed past is good as long as he himself continueth, so the act of a public society of men done five hundred sithence standeth as theirs who presently are of the same societies, because corporations are immortal; we were then alive in our predecessors, and they in their successors do live still'.¹

These remarks are clearly directed towards the Presbyterians who were a minority group. It is implied that either they had consented already to much of the present structure of the English Commonwealth (since they had passed part of their existence there), or they would require general assent to the fundamental changes they wished to make. In short, the idea of general assent comes into operation or should appear in argument only when the principles of political society are challenged, and the duty imposed upon the ruler by general consent has been ignored by him. The particular arrangements of the English Commonwealth, in Hooker's opinion, do not in any way contradict those principles. Presumably the Presbyterians would have denied the former; that is, insofar as they were engaged in political activity, they could deny that they had assented in particular to those things they considered corrupt. While on a practical level this would have been ^a good enough reason, they had yet claimed more than that particular things displeased them. Their arguments were fundamentalist and this allowed Hooker to use more general arguments against them in turn. They, the Presbyterians, could only deny that the notion of consent had any relevance to the occasion for they, of course, had not received consent for their projects, either in general or in particular.

However, if the Presbyterians had received assent to their 'reforms' then it could have been argued, using Hooker's own premises, that this particular instance could be construed as a legitimate operation. Such 'reforms' would then be binding on the body politic, and, if the Presbyterians had not used such extreme arguments, this could have been feasible. Such a construction is, however, somewhat academic. For Hooker not only accused the Presbyterians of irrationally transgressing the natural principles of experience but also condemned them for ignoring the character of English society. We are led to conclude that the Presbyterians are crazed in their endeavour to cut out part of the corporate identity as diseased. Were it not for the fact that 'corporations are immortal' they would appear to be attempting suicide (it cannot be murder for, one assumes, they were despite themselves part of the corporate body). In any case the remedy is too drastic, especially as the corporate person is not ailing. It is, indeed, those ready with the razor who are sick with unreason and injuring the body politic. They have mistaken their own identity and that of English society.

It is the business of governments so established by consent to interpret where necessary the laws of nature and to devise where appropriate laws for the sake of particular convenience. Such enacted laws enable the citizen body to know in detail what their duties are and the penalties for failing to fulfil such duties. Of course, if good and evil in all their ramifications were recognized, then no enacted laws would be necessary. But in conditions of imperfection authority and law are necessary for existence, and even

'the first kind therefore of things appointed by laws

human containeth whatsoever being in itself naturally good or evil, in notwithstanding more secret than that it can be discerned by every man's present conceit, without some deeper discourse and judgement'.¹

In this discourse such is the great difficulty in reaching 'correct' conclusions and so great is the possibility that mistakes may be made, that

'unless such things were set down by laws, many would be ignorant of their duties which now are not, and many that know what they should do would dissemble it, and to excuse themselves pretend ignorance and simplicity, which now they cannot'.²

The political world, in this way, finds its significance by being placed in a hierarchy or order and law created by God. Political authorities do not only propagate these laws or propose particular punishments for transgression of these laws, they also execute them. There is a sufficient gap between obligation and motivation for this to be very necessary. And 'wherein as the generality is natural, virtue rewardable and vice punishable', it is the particular business of government to determine the rewards and punishments appropriate to each law.³ For instance, in Hooker's judgement, theft is 'naturally' punishable, but the kind of punishment appropriate to particular thieving is determined by the executive of each particular political association.

It is particular ends and particular occasions that account for the variety of law in existence. End and convenience are the two necessary considerations when framing law. It is the emphasis given to one or the other of these considerations that determines Hooker's distinction in regard to enacted law.

1. Eccl. Pol., I, x, 5.

2. Eccl. Pol., I, x, 5.

3. Eccl. Pol., I, x, 6.

'Merely' human laws were and are enacted for reasons 'fit and convenient' and binds only those who are members of the particular society that pass such laws. 'Mixedly' human laws, because of the corruption that is now displayed in history, establish or ratify a duty to which by the law of nature men are bound in any case. For example, if corrupt practices in regard to marriage spread throughout a society, or men pay more attention to pleasure than duty,

'so that no way is left to rectify such foul disorder without prescribing by law the same things which reason necessarily doth enforce but is not perceived that so it doth',¹

then the duty of the executive in its wisdom must be to prescribe even in human law what the law of nature has already to be the truth.

The propagation and execution of law is thus not at all an arbitrary historical consideration. Law, any law, should not only teach what is good, it should also enjoin it. The constraining force of law itself comes, as we have seen, from God and from the consent of man. This, however, does not constitute the whole basis of political duty. For the duty of the ruler is not merely to execute any convenient law but 'good' law. And the devising of good law is dependent upon the principles of nature as well as on historical circumstances. These do not appear to conflict in Hooker's judgement, for 'to constrain men unto anything inconvenient doth seem unreasonable'.² In practice, however, it is the skill of the wise which ensures that generally they do not clash. This is most important for

'laws are matters of principal consequence; men of common

1. Eccl. Pol., I, x, 10.

2. Eccl. Pol., I, x, 7.

capacity and but ordinary judgement are not able (for how should they?) to discern what things are fittest for each kind and state of regiment'.¹

Hooker warns how much obedience depends on this fact. Most men think it quite reasonable that, once they have been informed by law (and not by a person) what their duty is, they ought to carry it out. This is a consequence of the belief that law is impartial and 'as it were an oracle proceeded from wisdom and understanding'.²

II

This is what Hooker has to say about political society, consent and enacted law, and it is not very much. Indeed, it is so compressed that it is difficult to understand in detail. The general drift of the argument we may gather, but it is incoherent for all that. This incoherence is seen especially at the point at which Hooker moves from the general to the particular, from necessity to indifference. Hooker himself sees a hierarchy from the specific if general principles of reason to the merely particular law appropriate to the occasion. Between these poles there is the category of the 'mixedly' human law where a rational principle is involved, but which (the enacted law) 'differeth in the manner of binding'.³ Human law may thus be a direct enforcement of a principle of nature or a customary law. They both may be enacted law but their force does not merely follow from their being imposed by a particular political authority. This applies even to those

1. Eccl. Pol., I, x, 7.

2. Eccl. Pol., I, x, 7.

3. Eccl. Pol., I, x, 10.

'merely' human laws, for they must not conflict with the natural principles of experience. Ideally, they ought to be 'deduced' from these natural principles.

Enacted laws imposed by political authority (in this case a traditional, not a 'natural' authority) are, then, swept into the natural context and made to depend, morally and 'philosophically', on that context. Hooker recognizes no objection to this. He feels free to glide imperceptibly from the laws of nature to the enacted laws of historical societies. Yet this movement is quite illegitimate for those for whom law is composed of various strands, each referring to different levels of experience.

Hooker's notion of law may be considered under four headings. These are its general nature, its rationality, its moral essence and its traditional traits. As we have seen, these aspects are a compound of moral prescription, philosophical explanation, and historical particulars. These latter details present in historical experience are a reflection of law's moral essence and general rationality. Ideally, these laws may be said to be 'deduced' from the general characteristics, though it is difficult to see exactly what is here meant by 'deduction' as such. Even if it is presupposed that there are moral rules of an absolute nature which supply a general criterion of all legal and moral duties, how these would be used in practice in a 'deductive' fashion is hardly explained at all.

Hooker's defining traits of law are all to be found in Aristotle's own concept of law and they display the same incoherence in the Eccelesiastical Polity as they do in Aristotle's

works.¹ As we have seen, the so-called demonstration or proof of the existence of natural law is circular. The 'discovery' of a rational and natural pattern of human conduct and the description of disastrous consequences for deviating from such a pattern do not in themselves constitute a proof nor indicate the 'existence' of a uniform prescriptive order of nature. It is, however, in such a fashion that descriptive principles and prescriptive rules, and logical conclusions and moral values apparently fuse into one system. The distinctions between theory and practice, explanation and prescription are all blurred so that, according to one's particular intention of the moment, emphasis may be placed on either explanation or prescription without ostensibly breaking the 'deductive' chain between theory and practice. Moreover, reinforced by the conception of God as a rational law giver, Hooker further blurs a distinction between legal validity and moral value, and endeavours at the purely 'natural' level to equate legal rules with moral norms.

The doctrine that allows, indeed requires, these distinctions to be less than absolute in this manner is that of natural teleology. It is this doctrine that demands, on the one hand, change to be considered a characteristic of law, which can thereby be described, appreciated and justified. On the other hand, it may demand, should the occasion arise, the assimilation, at the 'natural' level, of political action and legal rules to moral purposes, for the former are means to the supreme moral end. This moral end is natural and is supported by the doctrine

1. W. von Leyden, 'Aristotle and the Concept of Law', Philosophical Quarterly, vol. 42, 1967. Von Leyden considers 'to the extent that he [Aristotle] advanced, in a rudimentary form, the notion of law as general and rational, he can be held responsible for some of the confusions inherent in the concept of law of nature'. P. 17.

of natural teleology. Consequently the distinction between kinds of action and statements about these actions becomes one merely of degree.

Hooker obviously considered that natural law was a useful and powerful 'theoretical' instrument; but there is a tendency, despite the supposed uniformity and 'timelessness' of natural order, for Hooker to admit that it had to be employed in argument in a heuristic fashion and revised in the light of the varying historical circumstances to which it was or is being applied. Quite simply, the explanation for this is that Hooker wants to have the best of both worlds. He desires natural law to have the force of 'philosophical' or 'natural' argument and yet to be applicable in practice. This, however, cannot be done, for in the end natural law becomes merely a principle or mode of argumentation to be used in practical argument. In short, it loses its 'philosophical' force and changes its character to suit the occasion. For in its original form as an 'explanatory' concept natural law is far too general to be of direct practical aid. The notion of the human condition propounded by Hooker is likewise too abstract for the ends he has in mind. To be applicable in practice the characteristic generality must be replaced by the particulars of present experience, although (and this is most important) the 'natural' mode of argumentation and its vocabulary may still be retained.

2 However, we are, perhaps, being too hard on Hooker in assessing his arguments at such a level, although this assessment must not be undertaken if the formal aspects of his thought are to be considered as having 'philosophical' force. It seems unlikely, however, that these formal aspects are of any value. The idea of a right or justified conduct in an unwilling

idiom. For behind the appearances of historical experience stand God's laws as a model and standard. All enacted laws are potentially relatable to this absolute standard in a 'demonstrative' fashion in regard to essence if not details.¹ Such rules do not have 'demonstrative' support and indeed Hooker considered it difficult to outline such a relationship.² Nonetheless, despite the great philosophical difficulty, which was judged by David Hume to be insurmountable, some rules are considered to be absolutely valid and natural in Hooker's mind. These are Christian principles of which Hooker would not admit, as Locke came to do, that they cannot be 'demonstrated' to be natural, and it is consequently safer to fall back on the 'reasonableness' of Christianity.

In Hooker's judgement, in Book One of the Eccelesiastical Polity, obligation derives not from the superiority of the political office and the authority of its holders, but from the natural and self-evident reason of the law itself.³ Hooker's remarkable Christian confidence enabled him to set aside the problem of ulterior sanction of laws without qualms.⁴ Why this was so was a matter of intention and circumstances. For Hooker was faced with a specific situation: the problem of Presbyterian fundamentalism. He was conservatively disposed both in politics and in intellectual undertakings. It is this combination in

1. One of the main distinctions between theory and practice is that explanation is concerned with the most general concepts, and practice is nothing but identifiable particulars. Yet natural law theorists have judged that an essence may be 'distilled' out of details on the one hand, and, on the other, be linked to those details in a 'demonstrative' fashion. Appearances consequently become trivially historical at this level. But of course in the later books Hooker implicitly negates the trivializing of historical experience that appears in natural law doctrine.
2. So too did Locke. Works of John Locke, London, 1801, vol. VII, no. 138-142.
3. He is unable to keep to this in the later books.
4. John Locke, Two Treatises on Government, ed. P. Abrams, Cambridge, 1967. Introduction, p. 7.

practice that allows Hooker to write as though the 'great rationalistic assumption' of Christianity, the assumption of 'sure access to the nature and purposes of God and his creation, was universally valid.'¹ The specific characteristics of this natural view of experience were, of course, challenged by Calvinism, and in the seventeenth century an increasing critical debate about the nature of law eventually undermined confidence in certain circles as to the 'demonstrable' support for, if not the actual existence of, natural law. In this sense, those who were genuinely puzzled about natural law may perhaps be considered more philosophical than Hooker. If, however, we allow that Hooker's intention was practical in the sense defined in this work, he is able quite easily, not merely because he had great 'philosophical' confidence in natural law, but also because his intention was indeed practical, to move from historical detail to principles without any great inconvenience. For the principles he regarded as true are not the philosophical presuppositions of practice in general but the presuppositions of what he considered to be the Christian tradition in particular. The two tended to be equated in Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, but this was a result of historical circumstances. Logically, however, such experiences may be distinguished in such a manner that there is no necessary commerce between them. I have endeavoured to examine Hooker's ideas both on their own terms and on terms which I regard as giving a more satisfactory and adequate explanation of what Hooker was about.

From the foregoing examination we may conclude that, while Hooker asserts that without sin political authority would have been an unnecessary aspect of human experience, he follows

1. The phrase is from H. Reier, *The Quest of Truth*, London, 1952.

Aristotle in elaborating his position. He makes the variety of historical societies a legitimate development of human activity in time. There is a tendency in his formal examination for Hooker to leave aside the notion that positive law is merely coercive and rooted in sin, and to assert that it is basic to the natural human essence to create a society. It is, consequently, only when he speaks of the origins of political society that Hooker subscribes to the Epicurean/Augustinian view. Otherwise he values highly the position and standing of political authority within society and subscribed to its evident necessity and goodness. This, I think, is what one would expect if there is to be, as Hooker asserts there is, some kind of harmony between man as a voluntary agent and 'nature'.

This tendency to consider positive law and government as having more than a coercive function in society is a notion that Calvin and those influenced by him implicitly denied. In contrast to their ideas on church government it would appear that they did not consider any single form of political order to be absolutely the best. They did, however, hold very definitely that, while political authority was the gift of God and therefore a 'natural necessity', its function was exhausted in keeping sinful activity under control. Thus political order itself had only an indirect influence on goodness and moral conduct as such. Direct control of moral conduct itself was left to the Church. In regard to the latter institution God had legislated into existence one valid way, one perfect arrangement for all true Christians.

Hooker recognized man to be generally a voluntary and creative agent, a creature of choice creating an order suitable

to his nature and circumstance, an aspect of which is the form of government 'chosen' and adapted. While there are numerous societies, so are there various types of government appropriate to the character of these societies. These arrangements are to be recognized as an achievement, not lightly to be changed if they appear to be uniform with nature's general characteristics. The reasonableness of positive law is thus indicated. It is a part of man's activity as a rational being to enact positive laws. Positive laws are neither arbitrary, nor irrational, nor merely coercive.

It must be remarked, however, in concluding my examination of what may be considered to be the more formal aspects of Hooker's argument that what he has to say directly about the origins and nature of political activity is not of an extended character. It takes the form of a repetition of traditional arguments. Because the Ecclesiastical Polity is not, as was the case with the Two Treatises of Government, the justification of revolutionary action or at least the threat of such action under certain circumstances, Hooker pays much closer attention to the character of actual political societies than to an analysis of the logical or natural preconditions of political society in general. That is why, in comparison with the Two Treatises on Government, the first book of the Ecclesiastical Polity appears very sketchy (though, except for the very important emphasis on property in the Two Treatises, similar in content). This is also the reason why it is much more diffuse and emphasises to a much larger extent traditional activity.

The position outlined in Book One was adequate, so Hooker judged, for his purpose. For even in sketching his position it is obvious that he differed profoundly from the Calvinist/

Presbyterian standpoint as to first principles. It was not enough, however, merely to elaborate these principles in a short work. He had to spell out their relevance and consequences for the society in which he lived. This he endeavoured to do in the remainder of his work. It is in the discussion of particular details that Hooker is most interesting, and, if you like, most 'original'. For as he proceeds it becomes clear how much emphasis he places on historical continuity and traditional identity. A concept or notion of tradition in which political space and historical change are no longer in conflict emerges out of this discussion.

10.

METAPHOR AND PRACTICAL ARGUMENT

(i)

At the beginning of his project Hooker states that his intention in composing the Ecclesiastical Polity was to resolve the conscience and to do so in such a way that 'for the ecclesiastical laws of this land, we are led by great reason to observe them, and ye [the Presbyterians] by no necessity bound to impugn them'.¹ Despite this acknowledgement that he has already arrived at a conclusion contrary to that of the Presbyterians, he proceeds in almost the same sentence to state that he is attempting to do this without prejudice and passion. In other words, we may take him to be saying that he is about to 'demonstrate' what the truth is in regard to law. This intention he attempts to carry out in the first book of his work. Here he endeavoured to give reasons for obeying the law, an undertaking to be regarded as a new departure. In view of which, he anticipated it

'might peradventure have been more popular and more plausible to vulgar eyes, if this first discourse had been spent in extolling the force of laws, in shewing the great necessity of them when they are good, and in aggravating their offence by whom public laws are injuriously traduced'.²

But Hooker chose not the beaten path of polemical assertion but the apparently more profitable course of attempting to

'teach men a reason why just and reasonable laws are of so great force, of so great use in the world; and to inform their minds with some method of reducing the laws whereof there is present controversy unto their first

1. Preface, vii, 1.

2. Eccles. Pol., I, xvi, 1.

original causes, that so it may be in every particular ordinance thereby the better discerned, whether the same be reasonable, just and righteous or no'.¹

In short, in Hooker's judgement, the Eccelesiastical Polity is an investigation of the methodology and principles of rational action in the world. This investigation he considered to be philosophical. Yet his arguments to substantiate his conclusions are inadequate in that for the most part they do not have 'philosophical' force. This, of course, in no way invalidates his prescriptions.

Hooker's investigation 'in depth', from his own point of view, was necessary because no general principle of experience could be thoroughly understood until one had penetrated to first causes. Such an investigation, Hooker judged, was particularly applicable to the matter in question, namely the status of law within experience and the character of human action in the world. It will, then, be 'seen, that force of law which is not observed by many'.² This path, however, is difficult, and it is, consequently, easier for the majority of men to be taught by their superiors what their duty is than for them to judge for themselves. The devising of law is, likewise, a 'weighty' but delicate task, suitable only to a few who are capable of 'judicious' decisions. For in law making that eternal law 'should always be before the eyes' of the statesmen since it breeds in 'religious' minds

'dutiful estimation of all laws, the use and benefit whereof we see; because there can be no doubt but that laws apparently good are (as it were) things copied out of the very tables of that high everlasting law'.³

In short, rulers should be as much schoolmen as men of the

1. Eccl. Pol., I, xvi, 1.

2. Eccl. Pol., I, xvi, 1.

3. Eccl. Pol., I, xvi, 2.

schools, and those who have not been educated to such a standard have no business in public life.

Law-making is, as we have seen, a 'weighty' matter, and it follows that criticism of existing law is of the same character. This task should be undertaken by only those who are publicly accredited persons and who have the capacity to discern whether there is any reason why a law should be changed as a whole or in part. This is a necessary undertaking on their part since 'except our own private but probable resolutions be by the law of public determinations overruled, we take away all possibility of sociable life in the world'.¹ While nature, in short, gives to experience a finite character, it is political order that gives a measure of certainty to the actions of ordinary men in the world.

There are, however, people in the English Commonwealth who are ignorant of the various types of law and of the force behind them and regard the necessary distinction between public and private as 'irrelevant'. England is as a consequence torn by dissent. For the Presbyterians who are making such dangerous criticisms of English institutions are arrogant and unable, because of their assertiveness, to accept the morality and traditions of the society of which they are members. They are ignorant of their duties and are dangerously unaware of their identity as members of English society. They may individually be the best of all people. 'Yea, I am persuaded', Hooker declares,

'that of them with whom in this case we strive, there are whose betters amongst men would hardly be found, if they did not live amongst men, but in some wilderness by themselves'.²

1. Eccl. Pol., I, xvi, 6.

2. Eccl. Pol., I, xvi, 6.

But from the point of view of public order such people are, according to Hooker, locked up in their own private dreams, irrational, oblivious to the rational principles of nature and ignorant of civil law. So 'by following the laws of private reason; where the laws of public should take place, they breed disturbance'.¹

Hooker, then, readily identifies his intention. We also may readily identify it as being of a practical character. This identification is not designed to be taken in the narrow meaning that it is prevalent in common discourse, but is used in a wider and more comprehensive sense, although it is not, of course, completely divorced from the familiar meaning. The concept of practice may, in effect, be taken to cover any attempt to change the conditions of human activity or to maintain in existence what is considered to be valuable. In other words, it comprises and comprehends anything that has to do with the conduct of life in general. It necessarily, therefore, concerns human persons and their place and situation within the world, or, more precisely, within their own particular society.

Matters of conduct in the world of practice result in action, and action implies change, but not random change. The world of practice, of purposive activity, is, at any given time, already shaped by innumerable past decisions (and so is our character as a constituent part of that world). It has a particular configuration at all times, unless, that is, it is radically incoherent. But this configuration of activities (and we can never in practice discern the complete configuration) is not set absolutely at all, and, even while pausing to look,

1. *Recl. Pol.*, I, xvi, 6.

it is slowly changing. Again, however, the change is not completely random. It takes place within the context of previous experience. Seen in retrospect, change is from one particular stage to another. It is intentional even if the situation from which we start cannot be known in its entirety and the position we reach is not the one at which in precise detail we desired to arrive.¹ Order in experience, in short, is never completely stable and regular.

We see, therefore, that the conduct of life is concerned with the order and desirability of identifiable particulars. The configuration of these identifiable particulars is always changing. Change is both a threat to identity and an essential part of identity. Without change an identity could not exist in time. The world is peculiar in that in practice it consists of identifiable but instable particulars. We are never completely at home in the world, and this condition cannot be entirely reversed, because it is the condition of our being alive. In this sense the world has to be accepted and made the best of, even although that best is never good enough. To those who believe otherwise, however, the fate of Gatsby awaits. A man who

'believed in the green light, the orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter - tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms further And one fine morning - '!.²

No such fine morning can ever come, whether it is in the form of the true church or any other culminating state of affairs. We are, therefore, forced to conclude that in the world of

1. 'Total change is always more extensive than the change designed; and the whole of what is entailed can neither be foreseen nor circumscribed. Identity cannot completely be determined.' M. Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics*, London 1962, p. 172.

2. F. S. Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, in *The Bodley Head Scott Fitzgerald*, London 1938, vol. 1, p. 260.

practice, in a world of selves and other selves, a man's identity or that of a particular society is

'.... nothing more than an unbroken rehearsal of contingencies, each at the mercy of circumstance and each significant in proportion to its familiarity. It is not a fortress into which we may retire, and the only means we have of defending it (that is, ourselves) against the hostile forces is the open field of our experience; by throwing our weight upon the foot which for the time being is the most firmly placed, by cleaving to whatever familiarities are not immediately threatened and thus assimilating what is new without being unrecognizable to ourselves'.¹

I suggest, then, that Hooker in the Ecclesiastical Polity is concerned with such identifiable particulars and with such order as the English Commonwealth of his day enjoyed. The effect of this interest is to condemn the consequences of certain beliefs and actions on the laws and traditions of England. In short, he is concerned with the identity of the English constitution in the face of what he considered to be undesirable change. We have seen that the Presbyterians have been castigated as irrational because they are ignorant of the difference, for instance, between the public good and a private dream. They likewise deliberately disregard the distinction between probability and necessity which any rational being in the world ought to be aware of. It is clear in Book One of the Ecclesiastical Polity that at least Hooker is conveying his audience to the conclusion that the Presbyterians do not understand what it is to have a rational and indeed a properly Christian experience of the world. By the end of the first book he has shown to his own satisfaction at least that the Presbyterians are (1) irrational, (2) ignorant, and (3) irresponsible, and has at least implied that they do not know what

1. M. Oakeshott, Rationalism in Politics, p. 171.

is entailed in being citizens of the English Commonwealth. They are certainly not acquainted with the underlying structure of nature and thereby are unable to differentiate between the various laws of nature. This accounts, too, for their ignorance of what living in civil society involves. It is, of course, insinuated that the Englishmen who oppose such nonsense have experience of what being civilised and rational entails.

(ii)

Hooker's intention is, then, practical and so indeed is the character of his argument. In the main, Book One of the Ecclesiastical Polity, despite its supposed philosophical idiom, is a species of practical argument. It attempts to identify in general terms what it is to be rational. This endeavour might appear to be philosophical but the achievement is not. Truth is investigated not for its own sake alone but mainly for its considered influence and bearing on actual conduct.¹ The conclusions of the investigation conducted in Book One of the Ecclesiastical Polity are quite clearly bound up with the seven books that follow and are an integral part of Hooker's general intention to recommend the adoption of a certain attitude and disposition towards authority, law and change.

It is further suggested that Book One of the Ecclesiastical Polity is a peculiar form of practical argument in that it seeks to recommend a view concerning conduct in the world in the form of what I term systematically misleading practical argument. This is peculiar in that, while the world of practice

1. By this I do not mean to suggest that Hooker thought that natural law was not 'true'.

consists of identifiable particulars, the argument attempts to give a comprehensive description of reality in general and yet be able to offer practical suggestions in regard to particulars. The endeavour towards comprehension and coherence may lead to philosophy often by mere inadvertence, but simply because ideas are quite generally expressed by no means gives them a philosophical character. Despite his declaration of objectivity Hooker is not outlining the presuppositions or principles of thought and conduct in general.¹ He is concerned to characterize Christian thought and conduct.

It would not be claimed by anyone today, I think, that the Christian religion is somehow a philosophical creed. It is, to put it at its simplest, mainly concerned with man's relationship to God and the salvation of his soul. But Christianity is involved with conduct in the world. Indeed, for the Christian his religion enters into all his activity. In the middle ages the whole of reality could be identified as Christian. Consequently, Christianity could be taken to represent reality. For instance, since in the Ecclesiastical Polity natural law cannot by definition conflict with revealed religion (and it is only by claiming that nature leads 'rationally' to revelation that a conflict may be conceived) the conclusion we may justifiably draw, at least as far as Hooker is concerned, is that natural law enunciates only those principles to which the Church may subscribe. Natural law, in short, is nothing but the pre-

1. The two are, in my view, hardly distinguishable in Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity despite the form of the argument.

propositions of the Utilitarian tradition in a pseudo-philosophical terminology.

It is because the principles that are prevalent in natural law are not really philosophical at all that Hooker can use them in practical argument without the radical incoherence or 'leaps' that may occur when supposed practical consequences are deduced from true philosophical principles. Nonetheless, Hooker clearly believes that there are 'philosophical' principles which are relevant to practical argument. They are of two kinds, those that may be considered absolute imperatives and those that are indicative of how to act in practice. The latter are aids to judgement. They are guides to consistent and continuous choice over time. But the former absolute principles are not thought of at all in this manner by Hooker. He endeavours to use them as a 'therefore', not as a 'but', as axioms, not as considerations.¹ Clearly he believes them to be absolute in an axiomatic sense. He uses them to close a dispute, not to prolong it. In practical argument, however, there are no refutations, merely rebuttals. It was not the argument of the Ecclesiastical Policy but the action of the public authorities that silenced the opposition -- for a time at least.

In practical disputation, then, a principle is not something which may be given as a necessary reason for elaborating an argument; it expresses an inclination to choose. Following the indications that Hooker has given in the Preface and

1. J. J. Jones, 'The Philosophy of the Reasonable Man', *Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 13, 1963. The distinction is incorporated into his *Principles of Politics*, Oxford, 1966.

Book One of his work, we have forewarning of what is to follow, for the disposition 'behind' the formal argument has more than partially revealed itself. Indeed, it is a matter of wonder why any of his opponents thought it necessary to progress beyond the Preface, considering its tone. For clearly, what is elaborated in the Eccelesiastical Polity is not a dispassionate view of reality but an argument of a practical nature which took the form of a discussion of apparently absolute principles. The argument and its course are, however, determined by Hooker's intention, which is practical.

Hooker's argument can be identified still more clearly, for not only is it a practical argument expressed initially in general terms, it is also a religious argument. Now religious experience may be defined as being in general concerned with 'one's attitude towards oneself and the ultimate'¹. The ultimate need not, so it is alleged, refer in particular to a transcendent God² (in whatever sense transcendent may be taken) but in Hooker's case it does. In short, Hooker's argument is not only religious in the broad sense defined, but also theological in that the ultimate referent is God and his creation.

Religious experience in the way I have characterised it is a self-moving activity in the sense that it is not dependent on the validity of historical writing or scientific

1. J. M. Keynes, 'My Early Beliefs' in Two Memoirs, London, 1949, p. 82.
2. This, I dare to think, is not really true. If one were attempting to establish a philosophical explanation of what religious experience is about, then the concept of God must surely find its place in it.

enquiry in general. Only those with a reductionist bent of mind would dispute this. There is, however, within this self-moving activity, and the theological mode of discussion associated with it, considerable room for dispute about various particulars, and, indeed, about the character of the final referent, God himself.¹ The head-waters of the dispute between Hooker and the Calvinist/Presbyterian position may be seen to arise in connection with the problem of referring in religious activity and argument. Clearly the broad target in Book One of the Eccelesiastical Polity is the Calvinist position on this problem. In this tradition of thought the sole referent was considered to be Revelation, or more precisely the Scriptures as interpreted by the Elect. Here we find, so the Calvinists would have it, God's true Word. His creation was in their eyes so degenerate that it had little or no capacity to convey religious truth. It is the Bible that contains God's categorical message in regard to the true form of the Church. Just as important, it records the drama of man's existence on earth from Geneva to the Second Coming. Man is placed in his true dramatic setting, describing what he is and where he is going. He has no identity of major consequence other than as a player in this drama.

The drama of man's existence has its place in Hooker's thought, but it is muted and incorporated into a 'natural' framework. Consequently, not only God's particular revelation but also nature and experience in general act as referents.

1. Natural theology, of course, denies that religious experience is merely self-moving and considers that religious statements and arguments may be verified by reference to non-religious statements or arguments. This disagreement between natural theology and 'non-natural' theology is part of the context of the dispute between Hooker and his opponents.

These referents, however, are dependent upon each other for their full meaning. Ultimately God may be discerned in all creation. As a consequence, religion changes the spectrum of man's existence. At the same time, although it is true that some aspects of experience must necessarily be partially distinguished from others, they are all dependent on God for their complete meaning. Experience as a whole is to be seen within the great chain of being and law, while, because experience takes its rationality from God, he can and must be called into any argument, even practical argument.

(iii)

The notion of a chain of being and law may be characterized as a metaphor, or, to be more precise, as an extended metaphor. For present purposes we may accept the traditional definition of metaphor stemming from Aristotle as the 'transference' of a name or concept from that which it usually denotes or describes to some other object, based on a sense of similarity and dissimilarity. A metaphorical statement may be said to have two distinct subjects, a principal and a subsidiary one.¹ In the more powerful metaphors, these two subjects are brought together as we select, emphasize, suppress and organize features of the principal subject by implying statements about it that normally apply, often as commonplaces, to the subsidiary subject.² This relates very well to the

1. Max Black, *Models and Metaphors*, Ithaca, 1962, pp. 39, 44.

2. Max Black, *Models and Metaphors*, pp. 40, 44. On metaphor there is also an article of some interest by M.C. Peardaley, 'Metaphor', *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. T. Edwards, New York, 1967.

Great Chain of Being although it depends in this metaphor where the author has chosen to place his emphasis if one is to determine the principal and the subsidiary subjects. The two subjects of this metaphor are the notion of hierarchy and the idea of the teleological character of nature. The latter appears to have been derived from Aristotle and is 'scientific' in origin. The former may be considered to be a product of reflection on social activity and organization. In the metaphor, nature as a whole becomes hierarchical and society takes its place in that extended hierarchy. Nature is then normative and society natural. The one thus supports the other and vice versa. The argument, in this fashion, takes on a circular character and the metaphor is thought to contain some literal truth. That is, since it circumscribes the whole of reality, it is or becomes an extended metaphor.

It is easy to see the usefulness of this metaphor for Hooker's argument. Society, by being considered to be a part of nature, is after all good and not contrary to God's rational principles. The defenders of hierarchical society can find support by pointing to a supposed similarity of hierarchy in other areas of experience, recognized as the creation of God's reason. The original attribution of hierarchical structure to nature now forgotten, nature becomes a means of verification of the subject from which the original denotation came. This extended metaphor in Hooker's work, while it may be applied to changing circumstances, is finite in conception. It thus reinforces itself, for there is little of moral importance to discover about experience in general that is not before us for all rational beings to see.

Despite appearances, or attempted appearances, metaphors do not just come about: they are invented. Now language in practice develops not primarily to meet the need to know, but in response to the prior need to act. 'Alike in the life of mankind and in the development of the individual, the deed comes first, and later the reflection.'¹ Language, therefore, is often imbued with the spirit of exhortation and admonition. It is thus not merely a manner of describing but also a call for 'action'. The Great Chain of Being offers the comfort of not only describing what is natural but of prescribing it too. It is tempting to describe 'metaphorical systems' of thought such as Hooker's as debased philosophical thought, but not all such systems need be philosophical in intention. What is important is that such pretensions (whether philosophical or scientific) are considered 'valuable', and become part of the fabric of social thought.

Almost all conceptions can be extended in this fashion until they become mere commonplace assertions. In time, the origin of such positions in intellectual discourse is forgotten and supporting arguments which justify such conclusions are neglected beyond recall. At this level of thinking metaphors on a large scale do not become meaningless merely by being proven logically incoherent but by becoming out of date. In the common phrase, time passes them by. There is no attempt by those who appeal to them to distinguish between metaphorical and philosophical, or even literal, truth, because this would destroy the social value of the metaphors in question (that is, if enough people indulged in the activity). If for anyone,

1. F. H. Bradley, 'The Presuppositions of Critical History' in *Collected Essays*, 2 vols., Oxford, 1945, vol. 1, p. 5.

this is the task of the philosopher. Within the idiom itself, people merely cease to think in certain ways when circumstances change, although changes in the 'fabric of imperatives' of an age are (or perhaps were) slow.¹ What kind of experiences lead to this outdated or undermining in practice, it is not at all easy to say.² Just as, so long as a man is a confirmed animist, he will not be moved from his belief by what others consider to be contrary evidence, so we, for instance, who take for granted that historical changes have their origins in man's experience of his world, will not be put off by any suggestion that some changes might be inexplicable from this point of view.

All this, I suggest, applies to Hooker's position and argument. In the face of threatened dissolution of institutions and ways of conduct that he considered valuable, he reiterated a traditional argument that took the form of an extended metaphor. Turbayne defines an extended metaphor as a myth in which an apparent or face-value assertion is interpreted in a universal manner.³ That is, an extended metaphor is a believed absurdity, believed because the absurdity goes unrecognized. But these are, I think, terms suitable only to the opponent of an extended metaphor, while I seek merely to characterize it. It is not a myth nor a category mistake at all; it is only one form that practical conversation

1. J. H. Hexter, 'The Loom of Language and the Fabric of Imperatives: the Case of Il Principe and Utopia', *American Historical Review*, vol. LXIX, 1964.
2. Collingwood had a similar problem in accounting for changes in absolute presuppositions. See *An Essay on Metaphysics*, Oxford, 1940, p. 48, note.
3. C. Turbayne, *The Myth of Metaphor*, New Haven, 1962.

has taken and does so still.

In the Ecclesiastical Polity, the extended metaphor gives some kind of coherence to a variety of beliefs and imperatives. It is the string and tape round a badly packed parcel, and is designed to withstand the rough handling of time. Hooker's metaphor is not, however, an inert form; it can present a variety of fronts. In the first place it can recognize what is inimical to it, in this case certain fundamentalist ideas. It can relate what is new and strange to what is old and valuable. In fact, it creates similarities, and because of the content and character of Hooker's particular metaphor, it is capable of declaring in a general fashion what is or is not rational conduct. It propounds what is known and what must be recognized to be the case. The built-in conclusion of Hooker's use of extended metaphor is that the Presbyterians are ignorant and irrational for endeavouring to subvert the true order of things. What they are doing, by the very fact that Hooker is unable to assimilate their particular way of thinking to his own, is subverting Hooker's (and he believes England's) set of presuppositions and ways of thinking and acting.

I do not mean to suggest from the foregoing discussion that all metaphors used in political thought and argument are extended metaphors. Metaphors are used and consciously so. And here the force of a metaphor, if not the form, is no different from that of an analogy. Metaphors are, however, not always used with conscious force. Our language is littered with metaphors whose origin as metaphor is forgotten. They are usually termed dead metaphors. (To characterize them as

such is, of course, to recognize them for what they are.) The use of a word in certain situations may be said to have 'caught on', and because new generations have learned to apply the word or term in these situations without thinking of it as a metaphor, the sense in which the term is now used becomes the established sense. Extended metaphors may be said to have their origin in such similar circumstances. They do, however, have almost limitless scope and application. In this way practically the whole of reality can be subsumed under this category. Hooker's metaphor is, therefore, both dead¹ and extended.

(iv)

Finally, the metaphorical argument of Hooker may be characterized as circular. Whenever the word nature appears we may suspect a circular argument. In other words, the term natural merely gives an apparent objectivity to what is already believed to be the truth in any case. Hooker himself is concerned to defend the variety of law within the universe, which variety is reflected in man's activities and therefore in his nature. Book One of the Ecclesiastical Polity is an attempted 'demonstration' of the truth of these ideas. But to demonstrate, for instance, that a certain notion of human activity and human nature is the true notion and that it should, in any argument, be respected by persons or groups that do not have any use for it, the selection and ordering of human faculties that it proposes must be shown to be uniquely and necessarily valid. It must be shown that certain human activities and the proper ordering of these activities are essential and constitutive of what it is to

1. That is, it is not recognized as merely a metaphorical description.

be a rational being, whereas others are not.

In the Eccelesiastical Polity, this distinction of human activities, and attitudes towards those activities, into categories of rational and irrational is carried out in a circular fashion. This distinction is made by reference to the criteria for the application of the concept of a rational being itself. Yet what is at issue is precisely the truth of the claim that these criteria are the ones that must necessarily be adopted. From a philosophical point of view, all arguments based on the historical authority accumulated by a given concept of what it is to be a rational human being, or, on the extent of practical commitment to such a concept, are ostensibly ruled out. For the question is directed to an ordering of human faculties that is alleged to be independent of such considerations as these and must, therefore, be capable of being established or 'demonstrated' on other grounds.

Now what other grounds does Hooker bring forward for consideration? The answer is none. He merely states what he believes to be the case and his appeal is really to intuition or, more precisely, to a tradition of thought, in his attempt to justify his case. The notion, however, that the essentiality of certain attributes of a thing and the correctness of certain distinctions can simply be 'seen', and that it is this intuition of their essentiality and rationality that justifies their use as criteria for the application of the corresponding concept is no argument at all for those who do not believe what is merely stated. To say that the attributes come with labels attached, and that we identify them as rational and true is not an argument but a statement depending for its justification on an extended metaphor.

It is a good deal more plausible to argue that it is because attributes are in fact criteria for the application of a given label that we are inclined to say that we can identify the things to which that label applies when we see it. Hooker, in short, presents his case as one of 'seeing is believing'; it is, in actuality, one of 'believing is seeing'.

Hooker's endeavour, then, to provide a 'natural' foundation for his main ideas and opinions is no more than an emphatic re-assertion of the superior importance of those ideas to which that concept assigns a privileged position. The 'natural' dimension of such arguments is the claim that the things of nature (society included) are so constituted as to make just this mode of argumentation uniquely appropriate to them. This claim, however, turns out to be circular when it is not the presence in the things of the criterial properties of a concept that is at issue, but the status as criteria of these properties themselves.

In reality, what is effectively conveyed by the natural idiom of statement is simply a claim that we ought to use such and such a concept of law and human nature if we do not so already. This makes the whole argument circular in character since in effect the Presbyterians, or anyone else who disputes these ideas, are being told that they ought to act (and argue) in certain ways because it is rational to do so, and also that this notion of reason and law is the notion that they ought to use. This practical prescription rests on what is considered to be a 'natural' imperative, and the latter rests on nothing that is advisable for the purposes of argument (that is, philosophical argument). The argument on behalf of the proposed

concept of rationality turns out to be itself a practical argument, and what is more, a practical argument that lacks the kind of 'natural' support that, on natural principles, such an argument should have if it is to be authoritative. Hooker's absolute principles do not have the authority he claims they have.

This tells us something about practical argument. In this mode of experience we have come to think that there is no such thing as an axiomatic principle that can act as the final determinant in argument and action.¹ Practical argument is not like that. It is, indeed, the most contingent mode of argumentation, and what determines authority in practice and in practical argument is time and situation. Authorities in practical activity can, of course, be supported or condemned by argument. To some extent, such argument may determine the character and course of an exercise of such authority. Clearly the 'natural' idiom of expression in Book One of the Eccelesiastical Polity is thought to offer an absolute defence of the force (i.e. authority) of a variety of laws. This defence of law in general, however, is merely one step on the way to upholding the authority of particular laws in the English Commonwealth. The conclusion of Hooker's argument is that the 'natural' idiom authoritatively determines the validity of these particular laws. In fact, Hooker's opinions as to the value of the latter are prior to their reinforcement by the appeal to nature.

Richard Hooker is a person who believes that what England enjoys is for the most part a very valuable tradition. By an argument which claims what is valuable in particular is rational

1. At the outset of his discussion of Political Argument, London, 1967. Brian Barry rejects 'ultimate' principles in practice.

in general, he attempted to protect the identity he considered the English Commonwealth to have formed. Where a firm identity is displayed, or 'wherever identity is felt to be precariously balanced, a conservative disposition is likely to prevail'.¹ It is, then, as we stated in the beginning, the disposition of the disputants that counts for much in practical argument, and how effective a practical argument is depends upon the character of the society and knowledge of that society in detail.

'In every act of tribal life, there is, first, the routine prescribed by custom and tradition, then there is the manner in which it is carried out, and lastly there is the commentary to it, contained in the native's mind.'²

We have considered one aspect of the commentary of our native; we turn now to another.

1. M. Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics*, p. 173.
2. B. Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, London, 1932, p. 22.

PART V

NATURE, TRADITION
AND AUTHORITY

EXPERIENCE, AUTHORITY AND ORDER

In the fifth part of this essay our attention will be directed to the important place that tradition and institutional order attain in Hooker's thought principally in relation to his detailed examination of scriptural interpretation, the nature of the Church in time, and the order of the Christian Commonwealth. The present chapter introduces us to these subjects by endeavouring to examine, in a broad fashion, the nature and the place of tradition and authority in the Ecclesiastical Polity. The chapter is divided into three sections: the first deals with the notion of an objective external authority, the second investigates traditional authority and institutional order, and the third attempts to trace the relationship between these facets of nature, tradition and authority.

Before, however, undertaking this discussion, we may remind ourselves of the "natural" status of the principles that inform reality, for this has a direct bearing on our examination. The enveloping form of Hooker's argument is metaphorical or isomorphic in character.¹ In the Ecclesiastical Polity this isomorphic argument is expressive of a uniform and consistent disposition of mind, and

1. On isomorphic argument see S. Morris Engel, "Isomorphism and Linguistic Waste", Mind, vol. LXXIV, 1965.

this disposition is simply to see in the multiplicity of man's experience structurally similar patterns. The metaphor is employed as a means of displaying to the understanding the underlying unity of the natural and the super-natural. This system is not merely descriptive in character, it is prescriptive also. Opinions of a prescriptive nature may be "deduced" from the principles revealed. However, the logical operation of "deducing" recommendations or justifications of proposals about what to do in particular historical circumstances is nowhere elaborated. The system proclaimed provides only a vocabulary and serves merely as a context for Hooker's prescriptions.

The mode of argumentation employed by Hooker, namely that of correspondence, purports to lay bare the structure of reality. Potentially it is able to determine what is and what is not a part of this structure, and thereby to determine the pattern of reality. But, although ostensibly this order was considered to be "natural", that is, not created by human artifice, it was clearly a construction of related ideas purporting to represent the world from a particular point of view.

In Hooker's judgement, the principles that informed the order of experience were authoritative in regard to the ends that man does and ought to pursue. Such isomorphic support as these principles had was not, however, of the compelling

force that Hooker supposed. To unfold a correspondence is not to offer a logical "demonstration". Indeed, it was tacitly admitted by Hooker that the natural principles governing reality in general were so abstract as to stand in need of interpretation. Such principles may be considered to circumscribe in general, in particular situations an informal judgment was necessary to determine upon a particular course of action.

It was, nonetheless, assumed, if neither argued nor explained in a clear fashion, by natural law theorists that natural law did help to reveal "correct" or "right" answers in regard to conduct. This they needed to assume, for the moral nature of this law would otherwise become practically superfluous. At the level of political activity in particular, the force of natural principles was such as to make those who had authority and power accountable both to God and to the citizen body. The duty of obedience of the latter, indeed, was in part conditional upon the ruler conforming his reason and will to the principles informing political society. Accountability, in this sense, has certain identifying features. It is not, for instance, the kind of responsibility and accountability that may be seen within the legal system of constitutional rule. Here the standard to which the ruler is held is either a written constitution or a body of common and statute law.¹ In such

1. See J. R. Lucas, The Principles of Politics, Oxford, 1966, p.34.

cases a subject may claim that a statute passed by the legislative body is not valid, that is, not truly law, and can obtain a validation of this claim from the judiciary. If this procedure is allowed to work with some success, it is more than likely no great pressure for a form of accountability external to it will ensue.

Such pressure, in any case, assumes that such a form of accountability external to traditional authority can be satisfactorily devised, although it is extremely debatable whether it can. The accountability implied by natural law theorists is not of the kind just described. Natural law itself is not identical with the particular arrangements of any association in time, and it is possible that, in the present conditions of imperfection, it may be "interpreted" in an incorrect fashion. The right consequently assigned by nature to the rational man - the right to disobey the authority of a ruler when the latter violates one or all of the principles governing political order - is not a constitutional right of the character that finds expression in some procedure for testing the legality of a particular statute or a particular action. It is a right assigned not to the individual subject at all but to a rational being, and this right comes into play only as the result of a personal or "private" judgment of a kind external to the political and legal order itself. Indeed, to speak of right instead of duty and to talk of this judgment

as "private" may be considered to be a distortion of the truth, for natural law is not a personal area of experience but a general rational measure potentially open to all rational men.

The difficulty with natural law as an objective external standard is that it cannot, without a good deal of qualification and elaboration, do that which it claims to do, which is to offer a judgment or judgments applicable to all historical circumstances. There is no guarantee that in practice appeals to natural law would be consistent with each other, despite the fact that it (natural law) supposedly offers the "correct" answers. There appears, therefore, the possibility that a subject, or in this case a rational agent who happens to be a subject, may judge, on consulting natural law, that he must disobey the ruler's laws; while other subjects and, indeed, the ruler himself have an equal duty, based on their own "rational" judgment, to compel right action. One of them (or none, but not both) must, according to the law of reason, be "correct" in the subjects judgment, for in every situation there are categorical injunctions.

The kind of accountability that requires that the ruler conform to an absolute standard of which the individual rational agent has equal access is a necessity (to use Hooker's terminology). The other kind, which subordinates the subject's truly private judgment to the findings of a public office, takes its specific identity from the particular order to which it

refers. The distinction between the two kinds of accountability, between a constitutional right determined by public procedure and a rational duty imposed by external standards, is one that did not clearly emerge in the middle ages. There are perhaps two reasons for this. In the first instance, natural law was not merely an explanatory body of knowledge, it was also a collection of prescriptive injunctions. There was, therefore, no absolute distinction between theory and practice. In the second instance, the Catholic Church claimed from time to time to be the proper arbiter between the ruler and his subjects. That is, it endeavoured to act as the authoritative interpreter of the authoritative law. In this way the potentially radical danger that is an ever-present consequence of the attempt to set up standards external to the politically and historically contingent was apparently dissipated. For the individual had a duty of disobedience only subject to the approval of the Church which, thereby, acted in the capacity of a public judge in disputes over the interpretation of natural law in specific cases. As a result, the potentially anarchic situation that could possibly ensue if each subject were to be the judge of what was correct in every situation, was, in theory, avoided by virtue of the fact that both subject and ruler were liable to the final and universal authority of the Church.

This apparent solution did not, however, settle this problem at all, because, as the subsequent development of medieval political thought reveals, the difficulties

have only been displaced to a "higher" level and not eliminated. For, since the Church was constantly attempting to act as the public judge of the rational essence of particular laws, it tended to become incorporated into the political process and as subject to the historically contingent as the "lesser" political powers. If the Head of the Church claimed the right to define the conditions of political obedience and disobedience, then inevitably the institution of the Church would become the authoritative institution covering all aspects of human existence. Therefore, in spite of the appearance of political and ecclesiastical duality, there would, if the Church had been able to impose its will, have been only a single unitary system and a single "political" order of which the Papacy would be the head, and within which the authority and power of the lay institutions would be merely derivative. This was a conclusion that was openly recognized and often welcomed by many papalist writers of the fourteenth century.¹ It appears to have been implicit in a great deal of ecclesiastical thought about the character and status of political order throughout the later middle ages.

This theoretical coalescence (and that is all that it was) of church and commonwealth as the superior and the inferior powers in a single association, gives rise, unfortunately, to the same question that was previously raised

1. See generally M. Wilks, The Problem of Sovereignty in the Later Middle Ages, Cambridge, 1963.

in relation to the whole political order. That is, may the ruler (in this case the Pope) not act in a manner that contravenes the natural law? This question was commonly answered by claims that it was impossible for the Pope to err by virtue of his special relationship to Christ. Such an answer, however, is of a character different to the natural law thesis that the ultimate basis of the duty of political obedience is a rational assent to the authority of natural law. It amounts, indeed, to a doctrine of a unique personal authority for which faith is the only warrant. The real interest of the question in this new form is that it forces one to decide whether one holds to natural law theory in its "strong" or "weaker" form. In its strong form there is no possibility at all of public judgment of claims based on natural law against the political authority. In its weaker form an institution such as the church interposes itself as the final arbiter, against whose interpretation of the natural law there can be no appeal. It will be seen that Hooker for all practical purposes held to the weaker form.

The Reformation resulted in the loss on the Protestant side of one form of external accountability, namely the Papacy. Among radical Protestants natural law tended to lose the theoretically important place it had previously held, and was replaced by another form of absolute norm, that is, the Scriptures. However, the interpretation of Scripture likewise became institutionalized in various ways. One of the sects that claimed authority in this sphere, as the Papacy had claimed it in another, was the Calvinist. Thus, in time,

any political association that came to contain within its borders a strong Calvinist movement was faced with similar problems as when the Papacy attempted to impose its full theoretical authority.

Not all churches or political associations that rejected the authority of the Papacy did so for the same reasons. Some in point of fact did not immediately have to face and oppose a radical congregation, claiming through illumination, and intent upon establishing, absolute authority in religious activity. Yet the Protestants who still held to some form of natural law in the scholastic sense had their own particular "theoretical" difficulties. For with the loss of external accountability in the form of the Papacy, the Protestant scholastics, including Hooker, were, in theory at least, faced with the strong form of natural law. The gap felt by the Papacy was scarcely filled by the "national" churches. For in England, to take one case, the national church was not in a position to claim, let alone enforce, absolute authority, over and against the Crown.

Hooker's argument, in the Ecclesiastical Polity, may be judged to be "political" in that the notion of institutional continuity is brought to the fore to crush potentially radical criticism. An institution immune to the passing of time is, on his terms, an impossibility. For institutional arrangements are not directly matters of "necessity" but take their character from historical change and traditional development. Such traditional "growth" is potentially good in itself, and in England's particular case her insti-

tution's display no absolute flaw that would require radical alteration. The authority of the English constitution, consequently, is legitimate and commands the respect of all Englishmen. "For its dignity is authentic."¹

To remark that the English constitutional order has not contravened any of the precepts governing political association tells us very little about its particular character and identity. The importance of institutional continuity in the Ecclesiastical Polity, therefore, necessitates an examination of Hooker's attitude to traditional authority and to the problem of change in the world. The discussion is invariably somewhat complex. On the one hand, few thinkers denied the importance of continuity and order in political and religious associations. On the other hand, in the disputes about the character of institutions and about the nature of doctrine there were a number of "true" and absolute standards that were regarded as necessary aids to judgment. It was not, therefore, merely a matter of denying the relevance and importance of continuity or of certain standards, but, especially, of determining their relationship to each other. Mark Pattison pointed out the error of regarding the Reformation "as an appeal to scriptures versus tradition" when it was more precisely an appeal to history.² The historical work of the Reformation shifted emphasis not necessarily

1. Rebecca West, The Meaning of Treason, London, 1965, p.15.

2. M. Pattison, Isaac Casaubon, 1559-1614, London, 1875, p.362.

from classical to Christian antiquity, but from profane to sacred history. Such work centered on an attempt to recover and reconstruct the exact text of the Scriptures and the precise institutional character of the primitive church.

The Calvinist, however, was not merely, nor even primarily, a historical writer seeking to explain what had happened in the past by giving what he considered to be the "most probable of possible" interpretations, but a prescriptive thinker attempting to give authority to what he held to be the absolutely true church and to its position within mundane history. The reformer was a man of radical disposition. His intention was to use the new "recoveries" to prove that the historical church had failed to transmit authority in its proper form (it had become corrupted by change), and had, as a result, forfeited it by a preoccupation with mundane affairs. Yet, once they had condemned the present church, they, like other exponents of the "strategy of return"¹ faced the question of how to define the identity of an authority which had existed in the past, by what authority they now claimed to recognize it, and how it had devolved to them in the present. Since what was in dispute was the relevance of the action of the sacred Scriptures to the world of historical time, the radicals claimed

'the authority of the sacred acting on and through themselves, their acts being conceived as opposed to tradition; they claimed both to interpret the past and to reform by personal authority and charisma.'²

1. J. G. A. Pocock's phrase.

2. J. G. A. Pocock, "Time, Institutions and Action: An Essay on Traditions and their Understanding," Politics and Experience, eds. B. C. Parekh and P. King, Cambridge, 1968, p.227.

The Calvinist's concern was initially with the necessary means to salvation. One aspect of this concern related to the nature of the "true" church, those institutional arrangements laid down in the scriptures for Christians always to follow. The establishment of the "true" church was no guarantee as to precisely who was saved, but it was a sign that among the members of the community some at least were the chosen elect.¹ While, then, the underlying interest revolved around the salvation of the chosen individual, this often appears to have been lost sight of in excessive deliberation about the exact features of the "godly" community. In general, the possibility of the resurrection of the individual through faith and grace, and the emphasis on inherent sin and predestination, combined with the "timeless" character of the "true" church, led to a great devaluation of traditional activity and particular institutional order. Man's actual entry into eternity was not influenced by his time-bound deeds.

This radical differentiation between the activities of time and the order of eternity is not present in Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity. The decisive difference as to the

1. Calvin himself is ambiguous as to how many will be saved. Collinson, for instance, writes that "any Calvinist would find objectionable all men might be saved." (See his The Elizabethan Puritan Movement, London, 1967, p.37) However, Calvin wrote somewhere in his Commentary on 1 Timothy, "By exhibiting to all the Gospel and Christ the Mediator God shows that he wishes all men to be saved," and again, "the fruit of the sacrifice by which He made atonement for sins extends to all."

apparent reconciliation of the orders of time and eternity is the influence of Aquinas and of scholastic thought. Aquinas' synthesis of philosophy and theology, and reason and faith served, so it was held, to allay the inevitable clash and bind the orders of existence into an apparent coherent whole. While, however, there could be no radical differentiation between the orders of time and eternity, important distinctions were not to be overlooked. For, although man could contemplate the eternity of God or at least his natural "timeless" person as well as the flux of temporality, he was incapable of fulfilling his true end within the bounds of time. Between eternity and time, therefore, there was a distinction but not a radical differentiation. Such a projected differentiation was an irrational notion. God could not be separated in such a fashion from any part of his rational creation.

The use that Aristotle was put to by Aquinas and the scholastics in order to reconcile the faculties of faith and reason, the modes of nature and super-nature was but one aspect of the synthesis. What was important, more so for Hooker than for Aquinas, was the emphasis present in Aristotle on non-philosophical modes of thought and experience. At this level it was held that common experience was composed of numerous strands of expression, of skills and activities to which the rational and universal knowledge achieved by the philosopher could never be precisely equivalent.¹

1. Hooker is of course equivocal here. All knowledge is potentially relatable to first principles, to "rational" knowledge, and in principle is deducible from natural law.

Since these skills and activities were the product of time, they appeared, especially in the Ecclesiastical Polity, as those well-established traditions which formed the greater part of a particular political association's awareness of itself and its context.¹

In addition, then, to the idea of eternity, there is present in the Ecclesiastical Polity the notion of tradition or custom, the image of political order as composed of activities practised in the present on the presumption that they were practised in the past, and by predecessors in an indefinitely preceding number of pasts. Such an image is arrived at by repeating the presumption of usage and successful practice an infinite number of times. In Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, however, such traditional order is not formally at least self-justifying; and there is a presumption not only of previous performance but also of rational performance. Clearly Hooker was anxious to invest the present political order with authority. This he attempted to do not merely by regarding it as an inheritance from the past, but as a rational order bequeathed from a past which was likewise rationally ordered. Such a presumption the doctrine of natural ends allows him to make.

1. Traditional activity and natural law have quite distinct characteristics. They too are potentially relatable, and there are certain things that are explicitly regarded as irrational and may not be performed at all. These refer to denials of the truth of Christianity etc.

The injunctions of natural law, however, necessarily informed the activities of past generations. In reality, therefore, these actions alone, which apparently incorporated in their workings the injunctions of natural law, could throw light on what it was to be rational. The process of "deduction" need not be attempted. Such a position has strong support in the Ecclesiastical Polity, for traditional activity was regarded by Hooker as particularly important. Yet the form and, to some degree, the structure of his argument take on a different character, for the precepts of nature are, theoretically, held to have a force independent of their efficacy in past or present activity. To have held otherwise would involve relativism, absolute relativism. This is precisely what the natural law doctrine does not allow. A naturalistic ethic may be relativist at very little apparent expense (as, indeed, Hooker displays), but not at the expense of itself completely.

Hooker rejects, then, fundamentalism not only in politics but in religious activity as well. The common theological and philosophical distinction between things necessary and things indifferent is employed to justify "political" intentions and conclusions. In this distinction the former (things necessary) encompassed the authorized injunctions of nature and the Scriptures, the latter (things indifferent) defined an area where human purpose might endeavour. Originally "indifferency" was employed by the Stoics as a moral term to describe actions neither good nor bad, but subject

to fortune alone.¹ Among English Protestants, including Hooker, it was also frequently applied to external actions or movements. The Preface to the Book of Common Prayer, for instance, describes "the particular forms of Divine Worship, and the Rites and Ceremonies appointed therein" as "things in their own nature indifferent, and alterable."² Such external things, in regard to power of dominion in the Church of England, do have a political aspect for they may be changed only at the instance of the political authority. Hooker is, of course, defending such proceedings and the results of such proceedings.

While, then, the notion of things indifferent created an area of experience open to human interpretation and choice, Hooker had to avoid leaving it to the caprice of individual private judgment. Within this area of things indifferent, the law of nature was intended to act as some kind of guide. Philosophers could reach certain knowledge of natural law in those areas not rendered imperfect by the "stain of human frailty." As has been previously pointed out, however, it was not necessary to engage in philosophical reflection in order to be able to act in an appropriate fashion. At this sub-philosophical level of knowing Hooker insisted that the

1. Diogenes Laertius, Lives of the Philosophers, passim.
2. In this regard it is important to note that Book Five of the Ecclesiastical Polity is in part an examination and defence of the content of the Book of Common Prayer.

individual must, in general, act in accordance with the practice of previous generations. That is, to act in a proper fashion was to act traditionally. In this regard, "the world will not endure to hear", the Presbyterians were informed, "that we are wiser than any have been which went before."¹ Minimum knowledge of the laws of nature may be gathered from "signs", from uniform activity present in the world. Knowledge thus gathered amounted to "principles universally agreed upon, and not by one, or two, or few but by all."² It was an appropriate conclusion that "the things that are established" represent "the general persuasion of all men".

It is, consequently, the duty of all members of English society to obey the authority of the Crown. For the monarch occupies an office that has long been established and is in no way contrary to natural and divine law. It is not the business of individual members of this society to judge the actions of public authority. To be qualified to pass judgment in such matters is not merely a matter of membership but, most of all, of a proper public education. It is only as a consequence of a correct initiation into the public affairs of the community that the individual may legitimately pass an opinion on such matters. Such an education introduces the individual to the proper principles and criteria by which decisions are made, and these principles are those that have been duly tried and found to be helpful to the association in question. To take on a publica persona in such an

1. Ecc. Pol., V, vii, 3.

2. Ecc. Pol., I, viii, 9-10.

association, it is necessary to be aware of the difficulties of the role and to know the duties of that position.

Obligation to a political association begins with membership. The terms of membership are defined by the association itself, or formally by the authoritative officers of that association. More often than not so-called wilful membership (of political associations at least) is nothing more than continued membership after a certain age. After due reflection it may be decided that membership of such an association is abhorrent and evil, but change usually means adopting membership of another association. For a political association is only indirectly a voluntary society. Entry into a political association entails acceptance of the duties of membership. Stress on individual choice, however, may lead various groups to attempt to redefine conditions of entry and acceptance, and thus to change the identity of that polity, and of its members. This in essence was the Presbyterian endeavour. Such a move however was an anathema to Hooker, and his warnings against the disastrous implications for the English Commonwealth of those who would judge public order by inappropriate private criteria were numerous:

'The patrons of liberty have made solemn proclamation that all such laws and commandments are void, inasmuch as every man is left to the freedom of his own mind in such things as are not either exacted or prohibited by the law of God The plain contradictory, whereunto is infallibly certain. Those things which the law of God leaveth arbitrary and at liberty are all subject unto positive laws of men, which laws for the common benefit abridge man's liberty in such things as far as

the rules of equity will suffer. This we must either maintain, or else overturn the world and make everyone his own commander.'¹

Hooker concluded that

'of peace and quietness there is not any way possible, unless the probable voice of every entire society or body politic overrule all private of like nature within the same body.'²

Public reason must, then, have precedence over private opinion. It was, however, not merely the collective reason of a particular time that was superior; rather it was the shared agreement which linked together past and present generations.

'Whereof as any man's deed past is as good as long as he himself continueth; so the act of a public society of man done five hundred years sithence standeth as theirs who presently are of the same societies, because corporations are immortal; we move then alive in our predecessors, and they in their successors do live still.'³

From these and foregoing remarks it is clear that Hooker had a very important place for tradition in his defence of the Elizabethan Settlement against Presbyterian claims. He implies that part of a nation's duty and obligation to laws and government is its obligation to its own past. Therefore, to avoid confusion and indeed "devolution", any change within the community ought, if possible, to take place in keeping with its traditions. The established authority, which is, directly and indirectly, the achieve-

1. Ecc. Pol., V, lxxi, 4.

2. Preface, vi, 6.

3. Ecc. Pol., I, x, 8.

ment of the activity of past generations, should control any such alteration in public institutions and action,

For Hooker, then, change was a necessary aspect of historical existence.

'... whereas it is the error of the common multitude to consider only that what hath been of old, and if the same were well to see whether still to continue, if not, to condemn that presently which is and never to search upon what ground or consideration the change might grow; such rudeness cannot be in you so well borne with, whom learning and judgment hath enabled much more soundly to discern her for the times of the Church, and the orders thereof may alter without offence.'¹

Change was looked upon, neither as a mere innovation, nor as a return to a perfect form, but in England's case at least, as the perfecting of what was already potentially perfect. Change, in short, was an aspect of continuity. In the end traditional authority, custom and continuing practice, if not the most perfect, are the most appropriate guides to action in a society that is as obviously ordered as England is.

Institutionalization is, as J. G. A. Pocock has so lucidly shown,² the necessary cause of traditionalism. A society judges itself in purely traditional terms in proportion as it is aware of itself merely as a cluster or constellation of institutionalized modes of transmitting conduct. In the seventeenth century in England, for

1. Ecc. Pol., IV, xii, 2.

2. Principally in "Time, Institutions and Action: An Essay on Traditions and their Understanding", Politics and Experience, ed. B. C. Parekh and P. King, Cambridge, 1968.

instance, many if not all social and political institutions could be and often were conceived as closely bound up with the common law. That law was regarded as custom, and the activity of law making as the conversion into written precedents of unwritten usages whose sole authority was that of immemorial antiquity. The character of institutions, in short, was such as to favour the assumption that the only form of action was transmission and the only form of knowledge the inheritance of learning.¹ There is much of this of this style of thought in the Ecclesiastical Polity, although as a natural law theorist he could not wholly subscribe to such a purely traditionalist view. Nonetheless, in view of his emphasis on the difficulty of formulating good law and on the danger of indiscriminately criticizing existing law, he is a traditionalist. Employing the distinction between necessity and indifference, he can afford to adopt such a position without, in theory at least, jeopardizing the more formal aspects of his system of thought.

If one may so term it, the institutional vision is somewhat different from the transhistorical vision of the human condition. For it, the institutional vision, is focused on the system, or the political order itself, rather than on the self. It modifies the trans-historical vision for the simple reason that the self or individual reacts and appears differently in an institutional order than in one not subject to merely political order. He

1. See of course J. G. A. Pocock, The Ancient Constitution, and The Feudal Law, Cambridge, 1957.

exists amongst his fellow creatures and takes his identity from ~~his~~ relationship ^{to them}. Society and individual persons are, in this sense, co-existent and continuous with each other. Therefore, the understanding of time, and of human existence as experienced in time, disseminated in a political order, is an important aspect of that society's understanding of its own identity.

In the Ecclesiastical Polity Hooker's interest centres on the relationship between man as a creature destined for eternity and the character of his existence in time. It is clearly the emphasis which Hooker places on the time-bound character of man's external activities that differentiates him from those who would place all significance on the relationship of man before God. Thus, while the Fall has separated man, for the duration of his stay in history, from his final end, it should not be concluded that man's experiences in time are of no importance, either absolutely or relatively, to that end. It is true that through Revelation or by philosophy man, insofar as he is capable, may attain a certain knowledge of his true end. Yet Hooker neither expects nor hopes that every individual will become a prophet or a philosopher. At the historical level of man's existence, the traditional nature of political and moral action provides a measure of order which is not to be despised for its lack of absolute certainty. It is of supreme significance in man's "external" actions.

Despite its comprehensive character, then, the extended metaphor of nature does not give a complete picture of reality nor of human experience. What is missing is an idea of historical existence and the notion of tradition order. It is this latter notion that gives political space a time-dimension of its own, arrived at by extrapolation of structure, and thereby a dimension of order rather than of disorder and chaos. Since the presumption on which it rests is one of continuity rather than identity with something external (in short, continuity itself constitutes ^{all aspect of} its identity), it leaves room for - even while it stubbornly resists - the idea of a past alike and yet unlike the present. In this way a political and conservative image of qualitative change is arrived at, and this furnishes an important antithesis to the idea of time as the dimension of disorder and as the arena of evil.

Nonetheless, surrounded by areas of absolute certainty which necessarily have some bearing on man's conduct in time, traditional order cannot be entirely self-supporting. The notion of things indifferent does not comprehend complete indifference to absolute values at all. Politics can never, therefore, be a purely "secular" affair, because reality is not of such a character. Historical existence is bound by eternity and lower nature. Since man is eventually destined for eternity, time-bound existence is of value only as the natural path to that goal. But peace and security along this path are necessary, since only in such conditions may the good life be sought and, to some degree, found. To ensure such peace the

ordering of traditional activity must partake of the character ascribed to it by the necessary principles of nature. In the first instance, there must be about it a certain regularity of order and change, for these are the general characteristics of all natural activity. In the second instance, society should not only imitate or endeavour to imitate nature in the regularity of its working, it should likewise display a clear hierarchy. This hierarchy within society should be based on an ordered chain of knowing. Thus, those who are wise and skilful should occupy those places that constitute the highest points in the hierarchy. Society in general, therefore, is a hierarchy of roles whose occupants have the capacity to fulfill those positions. In an imperfect world, however, even those highest in the hierarchy are subject to the "external" authority of God and nature.

To conclude, then, while man's end is to exist eternally with God, this should not lead into the conclusion, as Hooker continually points out, that time-bound existence must rest upon a sea of uncertainty with constant likelihood of disaster. For history is not an area of disorder nor of any order whatsoever. There are sign-posts in the sea of experience. Change, however, cannot be reduced to the mere application of first principles, and this is admitted by Hooker with his distinction between necessity and indifference. The latter cannot be reduced to the former, but neither can the first principles be

ignored in this area of things indifferent. Hooker, nonetheless, comes to place obvious importance on the traditional order of knowing and acting. Thus, as long as those who hold public office are aware of the necessary principles informing reality, then historical existence may offer some opportunity for the good life. The institutional arrangements of Church and Commonwealth may not encompass all aspects of man's experience, they are yet necessary for their enjoyment. They constitute the institutional minimum both for life itself and for the good life. Respect for authority is an essential attribute of membership of a society. To assess its achievements by inappropriate criteria is the greatest danger to unity and the common good. It is this danger which provides the occasion for the extended discussion of scriptural interpretation, the character of the church in time, and the identity of the English Commonwealth which occupies the greater part of the Ecclesiastical Polity. To these subjects we now turn.

AUTHORITY AND SCRIPTURAL
INTERPRETATION

The importance that Scripture attains in Calvinist thought has been observed, and in this chapter we shall investigate the arguments that Hooker employs in rejecting the Calvinist interpretation of the Scriptures. Scriptural interpretation itself was dependent on particular habits of exegesis and specific notions in regard to what was considered to be a rational approach to the question under discussion. The Presbyterians claimed that Scripture revealed the godly model for ecclesiastical communities, and for all conduct of any truly significant value; that what the Scriptures prescribed ought to be implemented, and what was not explicitly there ought not to be practised at all. Hooker, however, considered that the Scriptures were authoritative for all things that pertained to salvation, but permissive for those that did not. In the latter instance, therefore, men had to adjust their affairs according to that which they held to be appropriate in the circumstances. It was this dispute about the authority of Scripture that was generally accepted at the time as the centre of a long and bitter controversy.

In the dispute between Hooker and the Presbyterians

it is clear that the point was determined on both sides by different ideas about human nature and the human condition in general. We have, on the one side, a radical attitude to the human condition, and, on the other, a conservative disposition in regard to the possibilities of human action. For the radical it is the particular act, or event that acquires special significance and importance. Such acts and events offer a "key" to the problem of human existence. They become points of certainty. Often, however, this certainty is ascribed to a particular institutional order, which may then determine the conduct of all who are fortunate enough to be born into such a society. Birth and death make little difference to that perfect state; there are no new departures.

The basis of traditionalist thought, on the other hand, may be seen to be an emphasis on the present political order as the origin of all relevant and rational action. Political actions, even to approach the success sought, must take into account the configuration of present particulars. Success, in short, depends upon adequate information and an informed judgment. It may be that the present order is generally regarded as unsatisfactory, but for the man of conservative disposition there is no absolutely safe place to which one may retreat. The most secure point in such a situation is that part of the present order which is held to be more rather than less satisfactory.

Only working from a concrete situation may success, however limited, be achieved.

It is, of course, only rarely, as J. G. A. Pocock has remarked, that a society regards itself in purely traditionalist terms.¹ In Hooker's mind sacred action as well as institutional continuity are both important aspects of man's existence. The workings of God himself and human order in history are conceptually distinct and entail different images of action and time. Yet they can be related, and what is important is the precise nature of this relationship in the work or works of any one person. Hooker, in his dispute with the Presbyterians, insists on the importance of institutional continuity and restricts the influence of the sacred to what he considers to be the proper area of its operation. The church itself is an historical commemoration of the most important of the sacred actions, and it provides the outward conditions, so to speak, for the "internal" operation of grace. This, however, does not mean that ecclesiastical organization and grace are not logically distinct. The Calvinists, in Hooker's judgment, here confused the two. His own discussion of the Scriptures is a working out of these distinctions.

Hooker examines three propositions of the Presbyterians in regard to the nature, content and interpretation

1. J. G. A. Pocock, "Time, Institutions and Action: An Essay on Traditions and their Understanding", pp.210-212.

of Scripture. The first concerns the use of Divine Law in Scripture, whether it can and ought to be the sole law that gives direction to man's activity in all areas of his experience. The second centres on the law governing the arrangements of the Church; whether, indeed, there is such a law or model to be discovered in the Scriptures, and if so, whether additions are legitimate. The third proposition relates to certain laws within the church in England, whether they ought to be further reformed so as to remove remaining "Popish" elements. As this third proposition is derivative, we shall be chiefly concerned with the examination of the first two propositions.¹

It must at this point be noted that our investigation is undertaken not merely to unearth Hooker's opinion on this or that point, but to bring out the character and structure of his thought in coming to grips with particular problems. The formal structure of Hooker's thought has already been examined, and in this chapter we shall see the characteristic principles of his thought brought into closer contact with the particulars under discussion. We shall likewise observe the emphasis on traditional authority and interpretation of the Scriptures arise quite naturally for Hooker out of a discussion of these particular problems.

1. I propose to deal with the second proposition and the character of the Church in time in the following chapter.

One of the conclusions of Hooker's general investigation of human experience was that there were a number of distinctive spheres of activity, although all were relatable to each other by being incorporated into their natural context. This view of the structure of reality governs his investigation of proposition one, and we may surmise that it will be rejected. As for proposition two, this is likewise governed by his initial rejection. He is, however, forced to enter into the whole matter of interpretation, for, at first sight, this question determines the manner and content of his opponent's arguments. They, at least, considered themselves to be merely pointing out the truths contained in Scripture, not interpreting it as such. In reply to this position we shall see that Hooker himself relies not only on his own interpretation of Scripture, but also on previous interpretations which had gained authority over the years. These interpretations could be investigated in a "rational" manner. Such an undertaking, however, should be carefully conducted. For the same principles that govern the making and the changing of public laws inform also the interpretation of Scripture.

For Hooker there is, of course, a strict sense in which the Scriptures contain all that is necessary to salvation. This authority, however, rests upon a confluence of evidences for the Scriptures cannot in theory authorize themselves. The reason is that, although Scripture

may profess in itself to contain all things necessary to salvation,

'yet the meaning cannot be simply of all things which are necessary in some certain kind or form; as all things which are necessary, and either could not at all or could not easily be known by the light of natural discourse; all things which are necessary to be known that we may be saved; but known with pre-suppositional of knowledge concerning certain principles whereof it receiveth us already persuaded, and then instructeth us in all the residue that are necessary.'¹

It is, in such a manner that the Scriptures are shown to be the true revelation of God. The "leap" from reason to faith is made as small as possible. Really there is no leap at all, merely a logical progression from lesser to higher forms of knowing. Faith in God's revelation is, therefore, a higher insight into His universal purpose. In Hooker's judgment one proof of this is offered by the fact that within Scripture itself there are many forms of utterance, none necessarily incompatible with the others.²

The principles and the structure of this hierarchy of "knowing" inform Hooker's opinion that faith must rest upon a foundation of sense experience, and thereby on historical evidence. This in itself, if "correctly" interpreted, cannot but lead to a verification of the need for revelation. The proof of this is certain, but what is revealed must be taken upon faith.

1. Ecc. Pol., I, xiv, 1.

2. Ecc. Pol., I, xiv, 3.

'The Assurance of things which we believe by the Word is not so certain as of what we perceive by senseYea I thought, that things which God doth promise in His Word, are surer unto us than anything we touch, handle, or see. But are we so sure and certain of them? If we be, why doth God so often prove his promises unto us, as he doth, by Arguments taken from our sensible experience? We must be surer of the proof than the thing proved, otherwise it is no proof.'¹

This distinction between proof and things proved is, however, spurious for Hooker has not shown in what way an investigation of natural experience leads necessarily to salvation at all. He has neither "demonstrated" the necessity or absoluteness of natural principles nor the ladder of necessity leading to Revelation. He simply assumes that this can in principle be done, but assumption constitutes no proof. In short, the authority of Scripture rests upon faith. The problem of interpretation still, of course, remains.

The extended metaphor of the Great Chain of Being, then, determines the general position that Hooker adopts in his examination of the Presbyterian argument, the origins of which, so he would argue, stem from "a desire to enlarge the necessary use of the Word of God."² This desire in its turn "hath begotten an error enlarging

1. "Mr Hooker's Answer to the Supplication that Mr Travers Made to the Council," Works, ed. J. Keble, Oxford, 1836, vol. III, Section 9, p. 718.
2. Ecc. Pol., II, i, 2.

it further than (as we are persuaded) soundness of truth will bear."¹ Hooker, consequently, pretends to a thorough examination of the central presuppositions of the Presbyterian position. Yet he is not concerned to investigate every particular detail, for opinions on these matters are symptomatic of a more general disposition.² It is this general disposition which must be thoroughly examined since

'in all parts of knowledge rightly so termed things most general are most strong. This it must be, inas-
much as the certainty of our persuasion touching
particulars dependeth altogether upon the credit of
these generalities out of which they grow.'³

In Hooker's judgment, the centre of the Presbyterian position is simply the belief that

'the Scripture of God is in such the rule of human
actions, that simply whatsoever we do and are not
by it directed thereunto, the same is sin.'⁴

Equally categorical is his own approach. He restates his opinion that the paths to truth are numerous and varied.⁵ These approaches are necessary even for an understanding of Scripture.⁶ In Hooker's judgment, therefore, the proofs

1. Ecc. Pol., II, i, 2.

2. Ecc. Pol., II, i, 3.

3. Ecc. Pol., II, i, 3. Here Hooker means natural "generalities" out of which the significance of particulars may be deduced.

4. Ecc. Pol., II, iv, 1.

5. Ecc. Pol., II, i, 4.

6. He repeats this assertion a number of times. See for example Ecc. Pol., II, iv, 2. III, viii, 13.

that the Presbyterians claim to find in the Bible to support the exclusiveness of Scripture may be shown on examination to be false.¹ What is particularly informative in regard to this apparently objective examination of the textual basis of the Presbyterian position is how much Hooker is bound by his own presuppositions and disposition. Indeed, he, in his turn, can claim that there are indications to be found in the Scriptures to support his own manner of thought.

The most important text employed by the Presbyterians to support their case is taken from Romans,² where it is alleged that St Paul, speaking in regard to things indifferent, concluded that

'whatsoever is not of faith is sin. But faith is not but in respect of the Word of God. Therefore whatsoever is not done by the Word of God is sin.'³

For Hooker, this judgment is a consequence of the use of mistaken criteria, and he answers from within the impregnable walls of his "rational" fortress in the following

1. The proofs concerning the exclusiveness of Scripture are, according to Hooker, to be found in
 - a) Four texts
 - i) Proverbs, ii, 9.
 - ii) 1 Corinthians, x, 31.
 - iii) Romans, xiv, 23.
 - iv) 1 Timothy, iv, 5.
 - b) Negative arguments of the Church Fathers.
2. Romans, xiv, 23.
3. Ecc. Pol., II, iv, 1.

manner.

'That albeit the name of Faith being properly and strictly taken, it must needs have reference unto some uttered word as the object of belief: nevertheless sith the ground of credit is the credibility of things credited; and things are made credible, either by the known condition and quality of the utterer, or by the manifest likelihood of truth which they have in themselves; hereupon it riseth that whatsoever we are persuaded of, the same we are generally said to believe. In which generality the object of Faith may not so narrowly be restrained, as if the same did extend no further than to the only Scriptures of God.'¹

In short, faith is knowledge and knowledge is belief.

It is in this remarkably extempore fashion that he dismisses the various texts employed by the Presbyterians to substantiate their position.

When he had shown to his own satisfaction that the interpretation put upon certain Scriptural passages by the Presbyterians were entirely without foundation, Hooker directed his attention to the considerations consequent upon the distinction between things necessary and things indifferent. Since the area of things indifferent is directly informed neither by absolute command nor by necessary obligation, any achievement in time is the product of human perseverance and skill. Choice and purpose are human characteristics, and "the choice is left to our own discretion, except a principal band of some higher duty remove the indifferency that such things have in themselves."² Negative arguments from Scripture can do

1. Ecc. Pol., II, iv, 1.

2. Ecc. Pol., II, iv, 4.

nothing to destroy this distinction between things necessary and things indifferent.¹ In Hooker's judgment such arguments are absurd. Therefore

'concerning the force of negative arguments so taken from the authority of Scripture as by use they are denied, there is in all this less than nothing.'²

This conclusion is important, since the dispute over the interpretation of the Scriptures in general and over certain passages in particular is not in Hooker's judgment merely an academic exercise. His own specific concern is directed towards the safety and validity of institutional order, and the particular lesson he wishes to draw is that the scope of Presbyterian pleading against human authority

'is to overthrow such orders, laws, and constitutions in the Church, as depending thereupon if they should therefore be taken away, would peradventure leave neither face nor memory of Church to continue long in the world, the world being especially such as now it is.'³

The Presbyterians by so endeavouring to enlarge the area of necessity to include discipline are in danger of undermining the institutional order that is at present in the world. This order is the most weighty stabilizing factor in the visible, "external" world. The attempt, therefore, to reform these institutional arrangements by employing mistaken standards will achieve nothing but destruction.

1. Negative arguments of the kind, "Scriptures teach it not, avoid it therefore."
2. Ecc. Pol., II, vi, 3.
3. Ecc. Pol., II, vii, 1.

It is, consequently, politically, as well as intellectually, necessary that the correct standards and the proper principles should be known and adhered to. The world cannot afford to entertain Presbyterian notions of what is reasonable and right. They are so obviously wrong.

The authority that a man may possess or may come to possess Hooker defines generally as "the force which his word hath for the assurance of another's mind that buildeth upon it."¹ This definition applies not only to matters of testimony and fact, but also to opinion and judgment. Much of our knowledge about the past, for instance, depends upon human testimony; and such reliance is unavoidable despite the many infirmities of man's nature. In regard to political action, human authority is equally necessary and doubly important for "the weight many times of some one man's authority is thought reason sufficient, even to sway whole nations."² In Hooker's judgment, therefore, direction in opinion and action depends quite emphatically on human authority. Such a state applies not merely to the "singular" sort who are apparently unable to think even a little for themselves, but also to those who are commonly thought to be somewhat more intelligent. Moreover, because of their knowledge of experience, authority, with regard to the latter,

1. Ecc. Pol., II, vii, 2.

2. Ecc. Pol., II, vii, 2.

'is much more strong and forcible; because they only are able to discern how just cause there is why to some men's authority so much should be attributed.'¹

The higher one scales the hierarchy of knowing, therefore, the greater the place authority has in experience. The authority ascribed to the necessary principles guiding reality informs those who are capable of attaining to such knowledge that human authority is itself a necessary aspect of time-bound existence. Hooker, then, assumes that "nature" prescribes a particularly important place for human authority in history. He goes on to propose that this theoretical or abstract justification of human authority in experience may have some application to political order in particular associations. "Nature", however, merely prescribes in general; it does not reveal categorically what particular authority should be obeyed. Only specific experience can give any indication as to whom to obey.

Hooker is implicitly aware of this problem, and he regards the authority ascribed to a particular order as a specifically historical achievement. To disparage such authority for "necessary" reasons is to apply, in England's case at least, incorrect reasoning. In general, the force of human authority does not flow from "natural necessity", but is an endowment from the past to the present. Hooker himself applies "necessary" standards only because the Presbyterians have applied their own

1. Ecc. Pol., II, vii, 2.

(mistaken) absolute principles to England's institutional order. He, however, is able to keep the absolute standards at his disposal at some distance by means of the distinction between necessity and indifference. This move leaves him free to stress the importance of proper order in experience and the significance of custom in institutional arrangements.

The need for authoritative guidance may equally be seen in the interpretation of the Scriptures for

"utterly to infringe the force and strength of man's testimony were to shake the very fortress of God's truth. For whatsoever we believe concerning salvation by Christ, although the Scripture be therein the ground of our belief; yet the authority of man is, if we mark it, the key which openeth the door of entrance into the knowledge of the Scripture. The Scripture could not teach us the things that are of God, unless we did credit men who have taught us that the words of Scripture do signify these things. Some, may, therefore, notwithstanding man's infirmity, yet his authority may enforce assent."¹

It is appropriate, therefore, that the methods employed to attain to knowledge in other areas of experience should hold in the interpretation of Scripture. Though the objects of knowledge may be different and the paths leading to them quite distinct, authority has a necessary part to play in the attainment of all the proper objects of thought.

Authority, therefore, is a necessary aspect of religious experience. This recognition of the place of authority in experience is the starting point from which to proceed to a proper estimation of and attitude to reality.

1. Ecc. Pol., II, vii, 3.

Authoritative guidance is the path by which the individual may attain to a correct understanding of not only a particular society, but also his particular position in the social hierarchy. On such an understanding of reality teaching of the divine Word itself relies. Hooker can see no valid reason why this should not be the case. For

'if, the natural strength of man's wit may by experience and study attain unto such ripeness in the knowledge of things human, that man in this respect may presume to build somewhat upon their judgment; what reason have we to think that even in matters divine, the like wits furnished with necessary helps, exercised in Scripture with like diligence, and assisted with the grace of Almighty God, may grow unto so much perfection of knowledge, that men shall have just cause, when any thing pertinent unto faith and religion is doubted of, the more willingly to incline their minds towards that which the sentence of so grave, wise, and learned in that faculty shall judge most sound.'¹

His argument being what it is, Hooker is quite confident that he has not gone too far in attributing so much importance to human authority in the interpretation of Scripture. There are obviously degrees of assent, and submission to merely human authority is not the highest. It is after all, Hooker affirms, no part of his belief that "authority of man should prevail with man either against or above Reason."² However, whether the appeal is made to nature or to revelation, human judgment is still necessary. Even those who claim that their position is based on divine authority alone are really offering an interpretation of Scripture. For it (Scripture) is not, Hooker judges, transparent in its meaning except in those places

1. Ecc. Pol., II, vii, 4.

2. Ecc. Pol., II, vii, 6.

concerning salvation. It is, consequently, utter madness to proclaim that the Scriptures contain all that man needs to live well while existing in conditions of imperfection.

'Admit this, and mark, I beseech you, what would follow. God in delivering Scripture to his Church should clean have abrogated amongst them the law of nature; which is an infallible knowledge imprinted in the minds of all the children of man, whereby both general principles for directing of human activities are comprehended, and conclusions derived from them; upon which conclusions groweth in particularity the choice of good and evil in the daily affairs of this life. Admit this, and what shall the Scripture be but a snare and a torment to weak consciences, filling them with infinite perplexities, scrupulosities, doubts insoluble, and extreme despairs?'¹

1. Ecc. Pol., II, viii, 6.

THE CHARACTER OF THE
CHURCH IN TIME

The character of the church, then, may not be defined by mere reference to the Scriptures. In these circumstances not only is there a great necessity for a correct understanding of the character and place of Scripture within the scheme of things, there is an even greater need for a right evaluation in regard to the relationship between the church invisible and the institutional church in history. This, Hooker considers, is vital for a clear judgment concerning the present state of the Church in England. To confuse the two modes of the church is dangerous to the position of the traditional church in England. For "church regiment" in history is a thing indifferent, and to compare its character with the body mystical in a direct fashion is to apply not only too high a standard but the wrong one. This chapter, therefore, constitutes an examination of Hooker's ideas about the character of the church in time.¹

Before continuing in detail a further elaboration in regard to the distinction between visible and invisible churches must be noted. This distinction, as one would

1. I have reserved a chapter for an examination of the principles of judgment in regard to ecclesiastical arrangements. See the following chapter.

expect, parallels that between nature and supernature.

'That Church of Christ, which we properly term his body mystical, can be but one; neither can that one be sensibly discerned by any man, inasmuch as the parts thereof are some in heaven already with Christ, and the rest that are on earth (albeit their natural persons be visible) we do not discern under this property, whereby they are truly and infallibly of that body.'¹

This mystical church, consequently, cannot be made visible in any way at all. Even the sacraments, since they are an aspect of the church's existence in history, are symbolic in their outward form.²

The visible church in history stretches from the beginning to the end of time. This historical company can be divided into two "moieties": the one before, the other after the Coming of Christ. This latter company shall exist from then until the Day of Judgment.

'And therefore the Apostle affirmeth plainly of all men Christian, that be they Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, they are all incorporated into one company, they all make but one body. The unity of which visible body and Church of Christ consisteth in that informity which all several persons thereunto belonging have, by reason of that one Lord, whose servants they all profess themselves, that one Faith which they all acknowledge, that one Baptism wherewith they are all initiated."³

This formula constitutes the necessary essence of the Church of Christ in history. This creed must be adhered to through all the vicissitudes of history till the Dissolution of time itself. It would be sinful and, taking into account the natural support that the Scriptures have,

1. Ecc. Pol., III, i, 2.

2. See chapter fifteen.

3. Ecc. Pol., III, i, 3.

irrational to repudiate the Christian religion in its essentials. As Hooker constantly reiterates, however, much more is required for the Church to function, to exist even, in history. It needs organization and requires protection for itself. Two common errors, however, must be noted. One is to suppose that the visible church cannot be infected by corruption. The second is to insist that the visible church itself should have an institutional unity.

'As therefore they that are of the mystical body of Christ have those inward graces and virtues, whereby they differ from all others, which are not of the same body; again, whosoever appertains to the visible body of the Church, they have also the notes of external profession whereby the world knoweth what they are: after the same manner even the several societies of Christian men, unto every of which the name of a Church is given with addition betokening severality, as the Church of Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, England and so the rest, must be endured with correspondent general properties belonging unto them as they are public Christian societies. And of such properties common unto all societies Christian, it may not be claimed that one of the chiefest is Ecclesiastical Polity.'¹

It would appear, then, from the foregoing remarks that the identity of the various Christian churches as public objects depends upon the institutional arrangements that they adopt. That this is a matter of human choice and historical growth does not mitigate against its importance. It is, consequently, essential not to confuse organisation as a matter of necessity. For general matters necessary

1. Ecc. Pol., III, i, 14.

to salvation are

'of a different nature from ceremonies, order and the kind of church government; and that the one is necessary to be expressly contained in the Word of God, or else manifestly collected out of the same, the other not so; that it is necessary not to receive the one, unless there be something in Scripture for them; the other free if nothing against them may thence be alleged.'¹

Such distinctions are not examples of "misdistinguishing" as the Presbyterians could have it. They are in fact, according to Hooker, quite "natural". Distinctions, in his view, depend for their efficacy and intelligibility upon correspondence, "upon comparison between our conceit and the nature of things conceived."² There is, indeed, an obvious distinction between matters of faith and the varieties of actions. It is, therefore, absurd to oppose ecclesiastical organization, a matter of public action, to the concerns of faith.

Ecclesiastical arrangements are, then, the business of public action. As Hooker reiterates, however, the framers of laws that govern this area of experience are not free to follow caprice. For even in this area there are necessary principles that must be observed, though these are framed in such a fashion that it would be self-defeating for a professed Christian community not to follow them. It is yet obvious from the general character of such laws that much is left to human judgment. It is, consequently, presumptuous of the Presbyterians to forbid limited change

1. Ecc. Pol., III, iii, 2.

2. Ecc. Pol., III, ix, 1.

in the sphere of public action. Moreover, though public laws are not directly elements of necessity, it is not a matter of complete indifference whether one should obey those laws or not.¹ Once formulated with the correct understanding of natural law and of the particular situation in mind, laws are binding on the whole church or public regiment. This is so since "the light of natural understanding, wit and reason, is from God."² The general conclusion is:

'Surely if we have unto those laws that dutiful regard which their dignity doth require, it will not greatly need that we should be exhorted to live in obedience unto them. If they have God himself for their author, contempt which is offered unto them cannot choose but redound unto him. The safest and unto God the most acceptable way of framing our lives therefore is, with all humility, lowliness, and singleness of heart, to study, which may our willing obedience both unto God and man may be yielded even to the utmost of that which is due.'³

In this passage, clearly, both method and disposition combine to justify the conclusion. The extended metaphor itself allows Hooker to circumscribe the sphere of necessity without danger of the Christian religion being confined to one specific area of experience. For God's grace and rationality pervades all activities, not merely

1. Ecc. Pol., III, ix, 3. "Unto laws thus made and received by a whole church, they which live within the bosom of that church must not think it a matter indifferent either to yield or not to yield obedience. Is it a small offence to despise the Church of God?"
2. Ecc. Pol., III, ix, 3.
3. Ecc. Pol., III, ix, 3.

those ostensibly "religious". Hooker's disposition is revealed in the way he equates the safe (and successful) way of conducting human affairs as the one most acceptable to God. The safest, indeed the best, way is to accept the traditional church for what it is, and to change it (if it requires changing) in accord with its recognized traditions of conduct.

That the area of necessity is, relatively speaking, quite narrow is further disclosed by the fact that divine law itself is in certain respects mutable. Hooker distinguishes, yet again, between the end of law and the route to that end.

'If the reason why things were instituted may be known, and being known do appear manifestly to be of perpetual necessity; then are those things also perpetual, unless they cease to be effectual unto that purpose for which they were at first instituted.'¹

It is quite mistaken to presume that God has instituted all laws pertaining to the Church. God's law is not at all dishonoured by partial change in its workings so long as the "Rule of Faith" is adhered to.² Yet upon one thing in particular does Hooker bear down heavily, and that is the habit of adding to Scripture by attributing to the Word of God quotations from speeches "in some historical narration or other, and to urge them as if they were written in most exact form of law."³ Indeed Hooker asks,

1. Ecc. Pol., III, x, 1.

2. Ecc. Pol., III, x, 7.

3. Ecc. Pol., III, i, 3.

'What is to add to the law of God if this is not? When which the word of God doth but deliver historically, we construe without any warrant as it if were legally meant, and so urge it further than we can prove that it was intended; do we not add to the laws of God, and make them in number seem more than they are? It standeth us upon to be careful in this case. For the sentence of God is heavy against them that wittingly shall pressure this to use the Scripture.'¹

The Presbyterians, in short, are not only irrational, they are also inconsistent. For they are quite unable to prove or support their position without additions to that body of truth which, in their judgment, really verifies itself.

The question, then, once the fact of Presbyterian inconsistency has been accounted for, appears to revolve around the proper limits of discretion as to ecclesiastical arrangements. The Presbyterians would restrict quite specifically the room for change, but this move was, in Hooker's judgment, entirely mistaken. He, naturally, had his own limits outlined. These limits, however, were generously broad, and within such limits he is prepared quite categorically to uphold the varied traditions that particular churches have displayed.

'Wherefore to reject all orders of the Church which men have established is to think worse of the law of men in this respect than either the judgment of wise men alloweth, or the law of God itself will bear.'²

In the end, not only are the presuppositions of the Presbyterian movement irrational and unsound, the very principles

1. Ecc. Pol., III, v, 1.

2. Ecc. Pol., III, xi, 13.

that they considered the Scriptures contained are not displayed in the sacred work. Their interpretation (and Hooker is quite sure that it is an interpretation) constitutes a repudiation of all rational authority. It has been shown to be incorrect by that authority. Consequently, they, the Presbyterians, must agree that "they have molested the Church with needless opposition."¹

It is, then, a feature of Hooker's argument that the area of necessity is narrower in its application by far than the Presbyterians would have the world believe. Indeed, "the substance of all religious actions is delivered from God himself in few words."² The administration of the sacraments as well as other ceremonies, however, require a good deal more in words and deeds. Much of the outward form of all religious actions is for the edification of the whole church, and in this regard it is not words which are of the greatest importance, but ritual which has the most profound impact.³ For, generally speaking,

1. Ecc. Pol., III, xi, 18.

2. Ecc. Pol., IV, i, 2.

3. Men are edified "when either their understanding is taught somewhat whereof in such actions it behoveth all men to consider, or when their hearts are moved with any affection suitable thereunto; when their minds are in any sort stirred up unto that reverence, devotion, attention, and due regard, which in these cases seemeth requisite." Ecc. Pol., IV, i, 3.

'Words, both because they are common, and do not so strongly move the fancy of man, are for the most part but slightly heard: and therefore with singular wisdom it hath been provided, that the deeds of man which are made in the presence of witnesses should pass not only with certain sensible actions, the memory whereof is far more easy and durable than the memory of speech can be.'¹

Experience, then, has shown the necessity of this outward recognition of things promised or undertaken. Often the origins of such ritualistic actions have been forgotten; yet they nonetheless retain their value. "The things which so long experience of all ages hath confirmed and made profitable, let not us presume to condemn as follies and toys, because we sometimes know not the cause and reason of them."² There is, in this passage, no direct reference to the notion of testing particular aspects of experience by reason or natural law. Those who see in Hooker a "rational" conservative as opposed, for example, to that "irrationalist" conservative, Burke, would possibly construe these remarks as indicative of a fall from grace.³ It is true that here Hooker is momentarily free from the trappings of the "natural" idiom of thought. It is still, however, in character for, as he never fails to reiterate, criticism of existing institutional arrangements, even when the necessary principles are theoretically available

1. Ecc. Pol., IV, i, 3.

2. Ecc. Pol., IV, i, 3.

3. Burke as an "irrationalist" is now something of an exploded stereotype. Much to be preferred is J. G. A. Pocock's interpretation (of one aspect of his thought at least). See "Burke and the Ancient Constitution: A Problem in the History of Ideas," The Historical Journal, vol.III, 1960.

should be carefully framed. It is to this concern for institutional order that natural necessity takes second place.

The particulars that constitute the world of practical experience are all that there is in practice. To impose an order on this mode of experience that does not partake of its character must necessarily fail. This does not amount to an admission that the particulars of historical existence have no order at all. It means that order in practice is always traditional. Present order is the product of past achievement. It is bound by the possibilities of time, and consequently there is no certain course for the order and the direction of affairs that can be imposed from without. Order paradoxically is bound up with and is a part of historical change. Within the context of his distinction between necessity and indifference, Hooker does to some degree recognize this position for he clearly believes that there is necessarily no absolute arrangement that the church must adopt. As long as it adheres to the principles of its true faith, that is, as long as it remains recognizably Christian, it is free to choose and develop its own particular arrangements. Consequently, the Presbyterians are mistaken in condemning certain Popish and Jewish rites as "ipso facto" sinful, since they are not apparently to be found in the Apostolic Church. Indeed, the foolishness of extreme opposition to "Popish rites" stems from a presumption against change and particular experience in ecclesiastical government. Here again the

the Presbyterians cannot hold categorically to their rigid principles for there are rites of a Roman origin at Geneva.¹ Yet the real point of all Presbyterian criticism is that the Church in England should imitate the reformed churches on the Continent. No church, however, is bound by necessity to follow the practice of another. Such thinking stems from an irrational presumption that in external relationships there may be found a refuge from the passing of time.

It may be seen from the fore-going examination of Hooker's attack on the central theses of the Presbyterian position how his emotional involvement with the maintenance of social stability was at all times his main pre-occupation. Most, if not all, of his emphasis is placed on the value and importance of institutional order. Those who desire to extend the area of necessity to include institutions are, in Hooker's judgment, dangerously mistaken. The Presbyterian attack on the whole notion of things indifferent is by implication an attack on existing institutions. By extension it is an assault on the habit of authority, the pivot of all institutions.

Public criticism by the ignorant, then, Hooker explicitly distrusted. Public reason was the prerogative, indeed the very quality, of those best qualified to take part in public activity. Those, who were only fitfully aware (if at all) of the difficulties involved in public action,

1. Ecc. Pol., IV, xiv, 2.

were disqualified by their ignorance from holding public office. Ambitious but misguided people ought to be made aware of their proper station by those more learned, and Hooker clearly suggested that when controversy arose, it should be settled by those holding public office.

'Easier a great deal it is for men by law to be taught what they ought to do, than instructed how to judge as they should do of law: the one being a thing which belongeth generally unto all, the other such as none but them wiser and more judicious sort can perform.'¹

Uninformed and unqualified criticism was, in Hooker's judgment, dangerous for its potentially disastrous political consequences. To encourage public criticism, therefore, in a haphazard fashion merely played into the hands of those who wished, for quite irrelevant reasons, to overthrow the Elizabethan Settlement.² A dutiful estimation of public authority was necessary to correct such views. Moreover, while first readings of the Scripture were carried out under the auspices of the church, a completely rational acceptance of Christianity could not possibly lead one to doubt the authenticity of the church's authority in regard to Scripture. The reliability and authority of ecclesiastical teaching was so obvious and necessary that an indiscriminately critical attitude was unwarranted.

'When we know the whole Church of God hath that opinion of the Scripture, we judge it at the first an impudent thing for any man, bred and brought up in the Church to be of a contrary mind without cause.'³

1. Ecc. Pol., I, xvi, 2.
2. Ecc. Pol., V, Ded., 4, 5, 6.
3. Ecc. Pol., III, viii, 14.

So bound up with the necessity of authority were his arguments the Hooker refused to acknowledge that the supposed independent rational activity could do other than verify the authority and teaching of the church.

'Afterwards, the more we bestow our labour upon reading or hearing the mysteries thereof [i.e. of Scripture] , the more we find that the thing itself doth answer our received opinion concerning it; so that the former inducement [of the Church] prevailing somewhat with us before, doth now much more prevail when the very thing hath ministered farther reason.'¹

It was Chillingworth who considered such an argument "presseth a man's modesty than his reason."² Indeed it does, and for Hooker that is the whole point. For in any area of experience the prevailing mood should be one of intellectual caution, not "prideful" ambition. Any possible radical interpretation of natural law is thereby closed. The necessity of institutional interpretation of the Scriptures is emphasized to such a degree that all radical criticism may be stigmatized as irrational and impudent.

It would appear, then, that an "external" point of view by which to judge present experience is difficult to attain. Hooker's argument, therefore, is an illusion (not a trick for he is not aware of the illusion). While he may claim that he is investigating the underlying principles of ex-

1. Ecc. Pol., III, viii, 14.

2. W. Chillingworth, The Religion of the Protestants, II, p.30, in Collected Works, 9th Ed., London, 1727. This reference to R. R. Orr, Reason and Authority, Oxford, 1968. The three previous paragraphs owe much to the passing remarks on Hooker contained in this work.

perience, this is hardly an adequate description of what he is about. For deference to authority tends in his argument to swallow up any independent discourse that he is likely to attain. In this way it is true that natural law, for instance, is not in Hooker's project "a creature of premeditation in advance of political activity, but of meditation upon a manner of politics."¹ And indeed, to adapt Oakeshott's terminology, so far from natural law being the quasi-divine parent of political activity, it turns out to be its earthly step-child. Consequently, the argument of Book One of the Ecclesiastical Polity does not logically presuppose the arguments or the opinions of the later books in a "deductive" fashion. Tactically, too, the area of necessity outlined in the first book has only direct application in an extreme situation. What remains, so to speak, is the historical dimension of human experience. The Word of God and natural law must certainly pervade historical experience. It only remains, however, to acknowledge the essence of the Christian religion and the principles that inform activity in general, and much is left to human judgment and discretion.

1. M. Oakeshott, Rationalism in Politics, London, 1962, p.119.

ECCLESIASTICAL ARRANGEMENTS
AND PRINCIPLES OF JUDGMENT

We have seen how Hooker's argument was structured by his distinction between necessity and indifference. His main concern was clearly with the status and the importance of public arrangements. Since the church as an institution partakes of the character of these arrangements, it is obviously subject to change as much as any other institution. If certain principles are observed, Hooker argues, such change may become an ordered progression towards the end desired. In this chapter these principles will be examined, but this examination will be put into focus by first glancing at a manner of thought which, generally speaking, reveals a marked opposition to Hooker's reflections.

By acknowledging that the church is subject to change, Hooker is not conceding that religion does not have a special place in the world. Indeed, religious experience itself is the root of all goodness and virtuous conduct. It (religious experience) extends beyond the confines of public worship and private devotion. It "perfecteth" even "man's abilities unto all kinds of virtuous services in the commonwealth."¹ Any belief sincerely held may

1. Ecc. Pol., V, i, 5.

help to do good in the world. It need not be the whole truth; what is important is that beliefs must be sincerely adhered to. Hooker judges that we have sufficient reason to conclude

'that all true virtues are to honour true religion as their parent, and all well-ordered commonweals to love her as their chiefest sway.'¹

There are, however, certain people who desire that religion should not have a special place in the world. They are by definition atheists. Since the world is objectively God's creation and experience of God is the supreme value in man's existence, such people proclaim themselves to be so irrational that "they hardly and scarcely seem to hold the place of human being."² It is, Hooker alleges, fruitless to argue with them.³ Indeed, the great danger is that, while he (Hooker) and his opponents argue, atheism will strengthen itself.

'With our contentions their [the atheists] irreligious humour is much strengthened. Nothing pleaseth them better than these manifold oppositions upon the matter of religion, as well as for that they have hereby the more opportunity to learn on one side how another may be oppugned, and so to weaken the credit of all unto themselves; as also because by this hot pursuit of lower controversies among men professing religion, and agreeing in the principal foundations thereof, they conceive hope that about the higher principles themselves time will cause alteration to grow.'⁴

1. Ecc. Pol., V, i, 5.

2. Ecc. Pol., V, ii, 1.

3. Ecc. Pol., V, ii, 1. "Till some admirable or unusual accident happens (as it hath in some) to work the beginning of a better alteration in their minds, disputation about the knowledge of God with such kind of persons commonly prevailleth little.³

4. Ecc. Pol., V, ii, 2.

According to Hooker, the greatest and most immediate danger stemming from atheism is the merely political use of religion.¹ Yet he is quite prepared to grant one of Machiavelli's fundamental principles:

'We agree that pure and unstained religion ought to be the highest of all care appertaining to public regiment: as well as in regard of that aid and protection which they who faithfully serve God confess they receive at his merciful hands; as also for the force which religion hath to qualify all sorts of men, and to make them in public affairs the more serviceable, governors the apter to rule, with conscience, inferiors for consciences sake the willinger to obey.'²

Hooker, however, is aware that there are limits to his agreement, and he warns that religious choice should not be a matter of fashion nor of political tactics. While, consequently, he may agree with Machiavelli that favourable auguries before battle strengthened Roman elan and helped to

1. "For a politic use of religion they see there is, and by it they would also gather that religion itself is a mere politic device, forged purposely to serve for that use. Men fearing God are thereby a great deal more effectually than by positive laws restrained from doing evil; inasmuch as those laws have no farther power than over our outward actions only, whereas unto man's inward cogitations, unto the privy intents and motives of their hearts, religion serveth for a bridle. What more savage, wild, and cruel, than man, if he see himself able either by fraud to overreach, or by power to overbear, the laws whereunto he shall be subject? Wherefore in so great boldness to offend, it behoveth that the world should be held in awe, not by a vain surmise, but a true apprehension of somewhat, which no man may think himself able to withstand. This is the politic use of religion." Ecc. Pol., V, ii, 3.
2. Ecc. Pol., V, i, 2.

bring victory,¹ such an outcome, Hooker maintains, ensued not merely because they believed the auguries but because

'.... whatsoever good effects do grow out of their religion, who embrace instead of the true a false; the roots are certain sparks of the light of truth intermingled with the darkness of error, because no religion can wholly and only consist of untruths.'²

The point is fundamental. Religion cannot be a merely external force.³ It must contain something of "the light of truth" for it to be efficacious and true to reality.

It is clear that the differences between Hooker and Machiavelli turn upon different ideas of the moral and the political, and the relationship, if any, between the two. For Machiavelli himself the importance of political action, even in regard to religious objects, depends upon a successful outcome. Thus, the prince, as any other in a world of change, must learn how not to be "moral". For

'The individual who is concerned to act morally on every occasion must necessarily come to grief among so many who are not moral. Therefore, it is necessary for a prince, if he wishes to maintain his rule, to learn how not to be moral, and to use this [experience] as circumstances may require.'⁴

Consequently, if the prince is to preserve his political position, he cannot afford to adopt a purely private

1. Ecc. Pol., V, i, 3.

2. Ecc. Pol., V, ii, 1.

3. See, for instance, Machiavelli, The Discourses, 2 vols., trans. L. J. Walker, London, 1950, vol.1. pp.243-44.

4. Machiavelli, The Prince, trans. G. Bull, London, 1967, p.91 (trans. changed slightly).

(and internal) moral point of vision,¹ but must learn how to act, not with reference to the requirements of what he might conceivably deem to be the "truth", but with reference to the requirements of external circumstances, and these include the point of view of other men.

The necessity for successful outcome determines the place of other men's opinions and the attempt to influence those opinions. For the problem the prince faces when he acts is posed by the character of his political position.

'Dismissing those matters which concern only an imaginary prince, and discussing those that are real, I assert that all men - and particularly those princes who are more exposed to view - have attributed to them various qualities which earn them either praise or condemnation.'²

To the extent that the prince's position renders him and his actions particularly external, his specific problem of preserving his political power is the problem of preserving certain estimates of himself in the minds of his subjects. The externality of his actions, however, is not the occasion for the disclosure of his own "internal" moral character and of the "true" principles which he holds. His politically relevant moral characteristics are no longer his own (on the assumption that he has a character other

1. It must not, in any case, be thought that Machiavelli would necessarily subscribe to the distinction between a public and a private life, where the individual in the latter area is "non-Machiavellian". Such a view appears to be too simple a deduction. See M. Fleisher, "Trust and Deceit in Machiavelli's Comedies," Journal of the History of Ideas, vol.27, 1966.
2. Machiavelli, The Prince, trans. G. Bull, London, 1967, p.91. (trans. changed slightly).

than a political one), but those which others attribute to him by way of praise or blame. Men, generally, in Machiavelli's view

'judge more by their eyes than by actual contact; for everyone can see but few can understand. Everyone sees what you appear to be, few recognize what you really are. And those few will not dare to oppose themselves to the opinion of many, who have the majesty of the state to defend them. And in the actions of men, and especially princes, from whose verdict there is no appeal, one judges by the result. So if a prince conquer and maintain the state, the means will always be judged honourable and universally praised. For the common people are always impressed by appearances, and the outcome of a course of action; and in the world the common people are everything. The few have no recourse when the many have rallied against them.'¹

The end that justifies the means here is not a higher end that justifies what would otherwise be an immoral course of action. The end is a "fait accompli" - an historical outcome which must be attained; only then in retrospect are the means justified.

Politics becomes, then, the necessary imposition of order, and religious activity is caught up in the net of political success. It is this wholly external character of politics and religion propounded by the "atheists" that practically compels Hooker to brand them as "this execrable crew", "these wise malignants".² The latter epithet can be taken to be a grudging admission of the wisdom of some of their opinions, for Hooker can and readily does recognize the political uses of religion without allowing it to be merely an external affair, a matter of absolute

1. Machiavelli, The Prince, trans. G. Bull, London, 1967, p. 101 (trans. changed).

2. Ecc. Pol., V, ii, 1; V, ii, 4.

indifference. For, in a divinely ordered universe a matter of absolute indifference is a contradiction in terms; all things have a guiding moral purpose.

Methodologically, and indeed tactically, Hooker occupies a point mid-way between the purely "secular" position of Machiavelli and the fundamentalism of the Presbyterians. He naturally subscribes to the truth of Christianity, but he is aware of the historicity of the institutional church. The point against Machiavelli is that the church in its institutional arrangements is but one aspect of the Church of Christ, the reality of which pervades the whole of time and eternity. Equally, the point against the Presbyterians is that the institutional church has no specific form wholly settled for all future time. It must, therefore, change in time.

Atheism poses an external threat to religious experience. A religious tradition, however, may collapse from within through excessive zeal and fear. Both of these provide the necessary and sufficient causes for superstition. Zeal, however, in Hooker's judgment, is possibly the most dangerous for it

'useth the razor many times with such eagerness, that the very life of religion itself is thereby hazarded; through hatred of tares the corn in the field of God is plucked up.'¹

Fear, in contrast, is a slow disease, although it too may destroy valid religious traditions. For fear itself

1. Ecc. Pol., V, iii, 1.

'neither knoweth the right kind, nor observeth the due measure of actions belonging to the service of God, but is always joined with a wrong opinion touching things divine.'¹

Hooker is, of course, agreed that superstitious practices must be removed. The problem is to determine what really are practices of a superstitious nature. The Presbyterians are of the opinion that many of the actions and ceremonials subscribed to by the Church in England are riddled with superstition.² Consequently, the legally enacted laws of the English community in regard to public worship are sinful and must be changed by any means at hand.

In reply to this position, Hooker grants, as he must, the point that superstitious practices are a sign of corruption in the church. Before, however, he discussed particular details, he again reiterated his distinction between necessity and indifference, this time in regard to public worship.

'There is an inward reasonable, and there is a solemn outward serviceable worship belonging unto God. Of the former kind are all manner of virtuous duties that each man in reason and conscience to Godward oweth. Solemn and serviceable worship we name for distinction's sake, whatsoever belongeth to the Church or public society of God by way of external adoration. It is the latter of these two whereupon our present question groweth.'³

1. Ecc. Pol., V, iii, 2.

2. "It is judged, our prayers, our sacraments, our fasts, our times and places of public meeting together for the worship and service of God, our marriages, our burials, our functions, elections, and ordinations ecclesiastical, almost whatsoever we do in the exercise of our religion according to laws for that purpose established, all things are some way or other thought faulty, all things stained with superstition." Ecc. Pol., V, iv, 1.

3. Ecc. Pol., V, v, 1.

Within this context public worship itself may be distinguished into its various facets, since it is

'ordered partly, and as touching principal matters, by none but precepts divine only; partly, and as concerning things of inferior regard, by ordinances as well human as divine: about the substance of religion wherein God's only law must be kept there is here no controversy.'¹

It is in fact against what Hooker terms things indifferent, the public arrangements of a given people, that the label of superstition is levelled. Such a label follows from the Presbyterians' denial that in regard to the order of the church man has a choice.

Hooker himself suggests that the principles that allow the Presbyterians to label the traditions of the English Church as superstitious are mistaken. In their place he proposes his own precepts or principles which are more indicative of the considerations involved in ordering the English Church. There are basically four. 1) Intrinsic Reasonableness, 2) Antiquity, 3) Church Authority, and 4) Church Dispensation.

Intrinsic reasonableness must necessarily be mentioned since this is a characteristic of God's ordered universe. The reasonableness of religion itself is to be measured by the worthiness of the subject from which it proceeds and by the object to which it proceeds. And "that which inwardly each man should be, the Church outwardly ought to testify". It follows, therefore, that "the duties of

1. Ecc. Pol., V, iv, 3.

our religion which are seen must be such as that affection which is unseen ought to be." In general, to be able to commend an action or an institution as rational a correspondence with "reality" must operate, "signs must resemble the things that signify". Consequently,

'the public duties of religion [are] best ordered, when the militant Church doth resemble by sensible means, as it may in such cases, that hidden dignity and glory wherewith the Church triumphant in heaven is beautified.'¹

Although there is, Hooker assumes, some "resemblance" between internal and external, the world of historical experience does not present a perfect order. It cannot take on the certainty of eternity. For those who do not appreciate this situation there may be inconveniences.

'In which case, for such private evils remedies there are of like condition, though public ordinances, wherein the common good is respected, be not stirred.'²

Apart from intrinsic reasonableness which the needs of his system require Hooker to mention, antiquity, it appears, is the best test for the appropriateness of particular institutions and modes of conduct. Indeed, those who have had experience of practical affairs have "never as yet found it safe" to depart radically from the traditions that have long been adhered to.

'It is therefore the voice both of God and nature, not of learning only, that especially in matters of action and policy, "The sentences and judgments of man experienced, aged and wise, yea, though they speak without any proof or demonstration, are no less to be hearkened unto, than as being demonstrations in

1. Ecc. Pol., V, vii, 2.

2. Ecc. Pol., V, vi, 2.

themselves; because such men's long observation is as an eye, wherewith they presently and plainly those principles which sway over all actions.'¹

The quotation contained within this passage is from Book Six of Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics. This book deals specifically with what might be (and has been) termed practical wisdom², and its conclusions would appear to contradict the orthodox view which Hooker adumbrated in Book One of the Ecclesiastical Polity in regard to demonstration in argument. The passage is quoted with obvious approval by Hooker, who goes on to remark,

'Whereby we are taught both the cause wherefore wise men's judgments should be credited, and the mean how to use their judgments to the increase of our own wisdom. That which sheweth them to be wise, is the gathering of principles out of their own particular experiments according to the rule of their principles shall make us such as they are.'³

The gist of this passage is clear enough, but we must remember that at this point Hooker is examining the character of things indifferent. In this area of experience any principle employed in action and argument may be considered to be a reflection of a particular experience. What the precise relationship between these second-order principles (if one may so term them) and the absolute principles or ends propounded in Book One is, Hooker nowhere explicitly relates. It appears indeed that the second-order

1. Ecc. Pol., V, vii, 2.

2. See W. F. R. Hardie, Aristotle's Ethical Theory, Oxford, 1968, chap. XI.

3. Ecc. Pol., V, vii, 2.

principles need not, but in theory may, be "deduced" from the higher principles. However, the two sets of principles can in fact only be held together in the way propounded by a pre-emption in favour of the "natural" view of reality and of the Christian religion. Yet what direct practical influence such absolute ends can and need have on public action is strictly limited by the distinction between necessity and indifference. Consequently, just as Hooker does not recognize it as a profitable enterprise to debate with an irrational atheist, so he believes the complete and absolute end of man is not really a matter for dispute, except in Book One. Here he does recognize that the Presbyterians deny the setting he has provided for man's end and its relation to historical existence, and makes a reply.

It is, therefore, argued in the latter books that in regard to public institutions "lesser" principles are of more immediate moment, and here, as we have seen, antiquity or durability is of supreme importance. For that which endures in time is valuable in itself. In practical activity to say that the paths followed are old and well-trodden is sure to find favour. Indeed, it is Hooker's view that most men (up to the present moment, that is) have been and are naturally conservative. "That which is new, if it promise not much, doth fear condemnation before trial."¹ Consequently,

1. Ecc. Pol., V, vii, 3.

"The main pretence of these glorious names, where they could not be with any truth, neither in reason ought to have been so much alleged, hath wrought such a prejudice against them in the minds of the common sort, as if they had utterly no force at all; whereas (especially for these observances which concern our present question) antiquity, custom, and consent in the Church of God, marking with that which law doth establish, are themselves most sufficient reasons to uphold the same, unless some notable public inconvenience enforce the contrary. For a small thing in the eye of the law is as nothing."¹

Since, however, the institutional arrangements of the Church are ever changing despite the antiquity of many of its practices, it is necessary for the church to have sufficient authority to regulate its affairs "as need requireth". Clearly those traditions that have endured through time are the product of wisdom. They come, therefore, to possess authority in the present.² As it happens, such authority is now vested in the English church which has, thereby, power to change laws "teaching matters of order". It is true that all inconveniences cannot be removed, but such "imperfections" do not justify purely private judgment on the church's present identity. For "that which the

1. Ecc. Pol., V, vii, 3.

2. "To prescribe the order of living in all things, is a peculiar prerogative which Wisdom hath, as queen or sovereign commandress over other virtues. This in every several man's actions of common life appertaineth unto Moral, in public and politic secular affairs unto Civil wisdom. In like manner, to devise any certain form for the outward administration of public duties in the service of God, or things belonging thereunto, and to find out the most convenient for that use is a point of wisdom Ecclesiastical." Ecc. Pol., V, viii, 1.

Church by her ecclesiastical authority shall probably think and define to be true or good, must in congruity of reason overrule all other inferior judgments whatsoever."¹

It is, therefore, irrational to reject outright the authority of the present Church in England for public order is a necessary aspect of living in time. The institutional church can in no way annul the imperfection of this existence, it can merely alleviate the difficulties. Consequently, if neither the divine law of God, nor the "strength of any invincible argument otherwise found out by the light of reason", nor public inconvenience, show to the contrary,

'the very authority of the Church itself, at least in such cases, may give so much credit to her own laws, as to make their sentence touching fitness and conveniency weightier than any bare and naked conceit to the contrary.'²

In Church and Commonwealth, then, the vested authority has the capacity to enact laws appropriate to the occasion. In carrying out their tasks the holders of the authoritative offices are guided by certain general principles, but "there are and will be always evils which no art of man can cure." However, matters are made much worse, Hooker argues, by application of incorrect principles. The end result of such rigid application of incorrect standards may be, and, more than likely, will be disastrous. The cause of such a tendency lies in ignorance of the appropriate criteria by which to judge a situation and in an inability to apply principles as the occasion demands. It is not

1. Ecc. Pol., V, viii, 1.

2. Ecc. Pol., V, viii, 5.

at all enough to be aware of the correct standards. Equally important are the variety of circumstances and information about such circumstances. And

'these varieties are not known but by much experience, from whence to draw the true bounds of all principles, to discern how far forth they take effect, to see where and why they fail, to apprehend by what degrees and means they lead to the practice of all things in show though not indeed repugnant and contrary to one another, requireth more sharpness of wit, more intricate circuitious of discourse, more industry and depth of judgment, than common ability doth yield.'¹

There is, in practice at least, no rest from the task of understanding, and "generalities"² are of help only to those who are aware of the limits of their use. In Hooker's opinion, only to the ignorant and the common do principles of such a general nature offer seemingly exact guidance.

It follows, as a matter of some importance, that those who are skilled in the execution of public actions should be allowed, as an extension of their authority, the power of dispensation. This power, however, may be legitimately used only during times of "necessity," and all it is able to do then is to devise

'how that which must be endureth may be mitigated, and the inconveniences thereof countervailed as near as may be; that when the best things are not possible, the best may be made of those that are.'³

1. Ecc. Pol., V, ix, 2.

2. "With gross and unpopular capacities nothing doth more prevail than unlimited generalities; because of their plainness at the first sight; nothing less with men of exact judgment; because such rules are not safe to be trusted over for." Ecc. Pol., V, ix, 2.

3. Ecc. Pol., V, ix, 1.

This distinction between "ordinary" and "extra-ordinary" powers is, Hooker argues, common in civil affairs, and he sees no reason why it should not be extended to include ecclesiastical arrangements. In fact this distinction was ancient even in Hooker's day. Later, in the reign of James I, the extra-ordinary powers of the Crown were emphasized to the extent that the limits placed on authority by the rule of law were overshadowed. All lesser powers were exercised by the king's permission, to be overruled when he considered necessary. In the "Ecclesiastical Polity", however, extra-ordinary power means exactly that.¹ Its use is strictly limited, and the intention behind the use should not be "to turn the edge of justice". Exceptions, then, to general rules may be allowed. The authorities may be allowed or may grant such exceptions but only in unusually difficult circumstances.

1. F. Oakley in "Jacobean Political Theology: the Absolute and Ordinary Powers of the King", Journal of the History of Ideas, vol.29, 1968, argues that the distinction may have been first used with reference to the power of God, and then found its way into canon and civilian law. Hooker, in fact, judges that the distinction firstly concerns God's authority, but may be applied analogously with reference to civil and ecclesiastical affairs.

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY
OF ENGLAND: A PARADIGM
CASE

It is a common characteristic of what we have termed systematically misleading practical or political argument that the more elaborate the superstructure of ideas erected the safer it is felt that the practical conclusions "deduced" are. It is such a view that governs Hooker's dispute with the Presbyterians. It is only in Book Five of the Ecclesiastical Polity that he finally arrives at a discussion of some of the particulars of English society. It is of course his purpose to defend the identity that this society has achieved. However, not merely does he defend it, he comes to the conclusion that it may be considered to be a paradigmatic example of what an association should be in at least two ways. In the first instance, the changes that have taken place in English society have been exemplary in their caution and consequently in their success. Such changes have attempted to continue the traditions of the past and have attained some continuity of identity with that past. In the second instance, the present practices of the English community in no sense contradict the dictates of right reason, of nature herself. There is no

necessary case against those practices.

For Hooker some indication of how to conduct public enterprises is provided by an examination of how the "reformation" in England was carried through. The first thing to notice, he suggests, is how changes in regard to the legal structure of any public association ought to be implemented. Clearly change in the law is often necessary, and many laws are enacted for "extra-ordinary" occasions alone. Such laws naturally must be abrogated when the circumstances occasioning their existence have passed. But "true withal it is, that alteration though it be from worse to better hath in it inconveniences, and these weighty."¹ Indeed, when a law is abrogated as being badly formulated and yet the occasion for its existence remains, even then Hooker asks,

'do we not herein resolve our very own deed, and upbraid ourselves with folly, yea, all that were makers of it with oversight and with error?'²

In general, then, if continual practice has established a law as useful, it would be quite wrong to change it. Unnecessary change would mean the loss of something valuable, a part of that public association's identity. Much discontent is or would be caused by voluble criticism and by swift change of that which had appeared "natural", that is, well-founded and long practised. Hooker concludes

1. Ecc. Pol., IV, xiv, 1.

2. Ecc. Pol., IV, xiv, 1.

'What we have to induce men unto the willing obedience and observation of laws, but the weight of so many men's judgment as have with deliberate advice asserted thereunto; the weight of that long experience, which the world hath had thereof with consent and good liking? So that to change any such law must needs with the common sort impair and weaken the force of these grounds, whereby all laws are made effectual.'¹

Clearly, far from being chiefly interested in the origin of law generally, Hooker is much more concerned with the effectiveness of such laws as England herself possessed. He is aware that change is a necessary aspect of historical existence, but uppermost in his mind is the need to stress that the necessity for change must be great. Any change contemplated must in any case respect the character of established traditions, as indeed those who had conducted the "reformation" in England had done.² The profit from change, therefore, must be as clear as possible. It would otherwise be dangerous to the authority and order of the institutional arrangements of any association,

'If we have neither voice from heaven that so pronounceth of them; neither sentence of man grounded upon such manifest and clear proof, that they in whose hands it is to alter them may likewise infallibly even in heart and conscience judge them so: upon necessity to urge alteration is to trouble and disturb without necessity. As for arbitrary alterations, when laws in themselves not simply bad or unmeet are changed for better and more expedient; if the benefit of that which is newly better devised be but small, sith the custom of easiness to alter and change is so evil, no doubt but to bear a tolerable sore is better than to venture

1. Ecc. Pol., IV, xiv, 1.

2. Ecc. Pol., IV, xiv, 3.

on a dangerous remedy.¹

The wisdom of these remarks is supported by the "peaceful" course of the moderate reforms in England. Hooker adds almost as an afterthought that the good fortune of the English nation following these changes is undoubtedly a sign of God's special Providence over England - a case clearly of "godly" conservatism well rewarded.²

This, in broad terms, is "how" the reformation in England was successfully carried through. Now "what" has it produced, what, indeed, is now the character of English religious practices? An enquiry into the distinctive marks of these practices is forced upon Hooker by the Presbyterians' allegation

'that touching the several public duties of Christian Religion, there is amongst us much superstition retained in them; and concerning persons which for performance of these duties are endued with the power of ecclesiastical order, our laws and proceedings according thereunto are many ways herein also corrupt.'³

The immediate objects of Hooker's attention, then, are the public duties of the Christian community of England and their administration. What public duties are prescribed in this Community are those set forth in the Book of Common Prayer. Throughout Hooker's investigation of these duties the emphasis falls on their reasonableness and legality, and on their practical value which stems from long use. In no sense are they corrupt. They are neither

1. Ecc. Pol., IV, xiv, 2.

2. Ecc. Pol., IV, xiv, 6.

3. Ecc. Pol., V.

against the precepts of natural law, nor do they constitute a gross undermining of the traditions of that society.

To be a member of the Christian community of England, consequently involved acceptance of the detailed practices of that association. It is the duty of its members to subscribe to those practices.

In the second section of the present chapter, then, some of the details of English practice will be examined and their bearing on Hooker's general argument elucidated. In particular, our attention will be directed to church building or religious space, instruction and prayer, and, where necessary, to the incarnation and the sacraments. In line with our discussion in the previous chapter Hooker's defence of English ceremonies may be seen to be based, not on "demonstrations" but on good reasons. The particular character of these practices is a thing indifferent.

"And so from rules of general direction it resteth that now we descend to a more distinct explication of particulars, wherein those rules have their special efficacy."¹ In short, we shall discuss what McGrade considers to be the most important question that Hooker is seeking to answer (at least in Book Five): "What does it mean for a community to be Christian? and What is involved in Christianity

1. Ecc. Pol., V, x, 1.

becoming the religion of a community?"¹

The first (and main) step in a community taking on a Christian identity is, of course, acceptance of the Creed. This acceptance constitutes a minimum requirement in the common jargon. Much more is however required to establish a concrete identity in the present time-bound world, and Book Five provides a discussion of the public practices of one particular Christian community. As McGrade again remarks,

'the Polity is intelligible as presenting a distinctively public Christianity in contrast to the religious privacies of the Puritan opposition and the non-religious or anti-religious ordering of public affairs suggested by the nascent secularism of the day.'²

It was, consequently, much more important for Hooker in his present dispute to ascertain the manner of religious practices in England and of the classes of persons involved in such practices. The basic class distinction is between the priests and the popular assembly. The distinction, generally speaking, may be seen in Book Five: Chapters i - Lxxv describe the public duties of the Christian assembly in England, and chapters Lxxvi - Lxxxix are concerned with

1. A. S. McGrade, "The Public and the Religious in Hooker's Polity", Church History, vol. xxxvii, p.415. This second article of McGrade's on Hooker is somewhat of a jumble. The sections, however, that deal specifically with Book V are particularly interesting and have been very helpful in understanding the character of Book V of the Ecclesiastical Polity. It should be noted that the answers to the questions posed by McGrade emerge out of Hooker's discussion of particulars.
2. A. S. McGrade, "The Public and the Religious in Hooker's Polity", p.415.

The Christian ministry. In this work we shall examine the character of Christian practices only, and not pass on to discuss the particular characteristics of the Christian ministry.

Hooker suggests in the first instance that we mistake the character of a religious community in time if we do not think of it as a particular association or as having places of public worship. For "solemn duties of public duties of public service to be done unto God, must have their places set and prepared in such sort, as beseemeth actions of that regard."¹ Such places have been instituted in various religious communities, and the dedication of churches in a Christian association is in no way peculiar. Such actions are a "natural" expression of reverence. These dedications, however, transform those previously private places into public space; and public space directed to a specific end - namely the worship of God.² Such an establishment in Hooker's estimation, is particularly important "for the avoiding of privy conventicles, which covered with the pretence of religion may serve unto dangerous practices."³

It is true, Hooker admits, that churches may become tainted with idolatry. Such corruption should not, however, lead to drastic or radical consequences. It should not

1. Ecc. Pol., V, xi, 1.

2. "When therefore we sanctify or hallow churches that which we do is only to testify that we make them places of public resort, that we invest God himself with them, that we sever them from common uses." Ecc. Pol., V, xii, 6.

3. Ecc. Pol., V, xii, 2.

above all provide the occasion for "proud" men to preach "devolution" and to call for the destruction of all churches as places for "vile purposes". The naming of churches, for instance, is not in Hooker's judgment a necessary sign of profanity.¹ Nor is the ornateness of churches necessarily corrupting.² Church buildings, therefore, are not to be regarded in the manner of the works of the Canaanites. "All places" where they had worshipped their gods were ordered to be destroyed, since they were grossly corrupt. In Hooker's estimation, however, the comparison with English practice is clearly false for

'examples have not generally the force of laws which all men ought to keep, but of counsels only and persuasions not amiss to be followed by them whose case is the like; [but] surely where cases are so unlike as theirs and ours, I see not how that which they did should induce, much less any way enforce us to the same practice.'³

In short, the churches of England are patently unlike the "Groves of the Canaanites". They are not places where superstitious practices may take or have taken place. Indeed, (with his usual jump to the opposite conclusion) Hooker judges that they are "withal so conveniently framed for the people of God to serve and honour him therein, that no man beholding them can choose but think it exceeding great pity they should be ever any otherwise employed."⁴

1. Ecc. Pol., V, xiii, 1-2.

2. Ecc. Pol., V, xv, 1-5.

3. Ecc. Pol., V, xvii, 5.

4. Ecc. Pol., V, xvii, 5.

This, then, is the character of those places where men may commune together for mutual conference, "and as it were commerce to be had between God and us".¹ Yet although the "purpose" of a religious community may be said to be the adoration of God, this indicates little of the actual manner of worship. Hooker discusses two aspects of this worship in regard to the English community, namely, instruction and prayer. The character of these activities in this community were under open attack from the Presbyterians. In reply Hooker's own discussion reveals how these activities are proper to a religious community and form a substantial part of the English community's knowledge of itself as a religious association. In Hooker's view the precise character of these acts as practised in English society is not a direct gift of "nature", but is a reflection of an awareness of a tradition of doing things. Such knowledge has to be acquired by every generation, and in the process it may, of course, become "tainted" by ignorance and error. It is Hooker's opinion that, even if this were the case in regard to English practices, the criticisms and solutions of the Presbyterians would be even more misdirected. The confusion and error would be merely compounded.

The first duty of the church, then, is to reveal publicly the Word of God and the promise of eternal life.

For the instruction therefore of all sorts of men to eternal life it is necessary, that the sacred and saving truth of God be openly published unto them. When open publication of heavenly mysteries, is by

1. Ecc. Pol., V, xviii, 1.

an excellency termed Preaching.¹

Such activity is peculiar to Christianity. It is true that there are other means of propagating the Word, but none that may be said to involve "public performance". Generally speaking, Hooker's discussion of instruction and reading the Scriptures is circumscribed by the judgment that

'since the mysteries of our religion are above the reach of our understanding, above discourse of man's reason, above all that any creature can comprehend ... belief consisteth not so much in knowledge as in acknowledgement of all things that heavenly wisdom revealeth.'²

The church, consequently, in public instruction at least, acts mainly as the "witness" of the Word of God. The purpose of this Word is that men might be saved. "Apprehension" of its truth is the first step along the path to that end. While, however, this end is essentially mysterious, the revelation, openly displayed, is required to be set forth in a form sufficiently clear to "maketh [men] wise to salvation".³ In Hooker's judgment this saving truth is sufficiently well formulated in Scripture for the Church to act most appropriately as mere witness.⁴

The place that the reading of Scriptures occupied in the public worship of the church was challenged directly by the Presbyterians. In their judgment sermons ought to

1. Ecc. Pol., V, xviii, 1.

2. Ecc. Pol., V, lxii, 1.

3. Ecc. Pol., V, xxi, 3.

4. "I hold it for a most infallible rule in expositions of sacred Scripture, that where a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst." Ecc. Pol., V, lix, 2.

take precedence over mere reading, and they went so far as to claim that the principal cause of writing the Scriptures was that they might be preached upon or interpreted by public ministers. The result was that they who held the Scriptures to be self-validating could be directly challenged by Hooker (who held that they were not) for placing excessive emphasis on the "interpretation" of the Divine Word. Indeed, he in turn could accuse them of placing man's interpretation above God's mysterious Word.¹ Interpretations of such a nature, however, are to be regarded as but private opinion, and the motives of those who constantly claim direct support from the Holy Spirit are to be held suspect. Moreover, such excessive emphasis on sermons has dangerous consequences. It may, for instance, cause ignorant people to become unreasonably disaffected with present practices and "to let those things carelessly pass by their ears, which they have oftentimes heard before, or know they may hear again whenever it pleaseth themselves."² In any case the importance placed on sermons "hath neither evidence of truth nor proof sufficient to give it warrant."³ The zeal spent in support of sermons, therefore, is mistaken and pernicious, and Hooker suggests that the supporters of such an irrational cause should ask "that pardon which common humanity doth easily grant."⁴

1. Ecc. Pol., V, xxii, 10.

2. Ecc. Pol., V, xxii, 20.

3. Ecc. Pol., V, xxii, 20.

4. Ecc. Pol., V, xxii, 20.

A similar judgment that the practices of a community should be shaped to the characteristics of the common life rather than to private desire informs Hooker's long discussion of the nature of prayer and its place in English church services. Prayer itself testifies to a community's acknowledgment of God's supreme goodness. It has two aspects.

'This holy and religious duty of service towards God concerneth us one way in that we are men, and another way in that we are joined as parts to that visible mystical body which is his Church.'¹

In its latter aspect prayer may be seen as a general characteristic of all intelligible creation for even the Saints in Heaven pray. Since, however, "the knowledge is small which we have on earth, concerning things that are done in heaven",² Hooker's discussion naturally concentrates on the place that prayer occupies in the life of man in time.

In the first instance, public in contradistinction to private prayer must take place at a particular time and specific locality. It is also, in Hooker's estimation, "much worthier" than private prayer. Such a conclusion follows directly from the presumption that "the things we ask publicly are approved as needful and good in the judgment of all."³ Moreover, such public devotion is greatly aided by the solemn form of the common prayer itself, which helps to overcome the "imbecility and weakness in us",⁴ and

1. Ecc. Pol., V, xxv, 1.

2. Ecc. Pol., V, xxvi, 1.

3. Ecc. Pol., V, xxv, 1.

4. Ecc. Pol., V, xxv, 1.

is of particular significance in instilling love for and devotion to God. To attack such common prayers is "impious", and indeed Hooker judges that

'The best stratagem that Satan hath, who knoweth his kingdom to be no one way more shaken than by the public devout prayers of God's Church, is by traducing the form and the manner of them to bring them into contempt, and so to shake the force of all men's devotion towards God.'¹

Thus by applying merely private standards to public service the Presbyterians are playing into the Devil's hands. Their criticisms of the ritual of the English Church are dangerously misleading, and much of value would be lost if their "reforms were to be instituted". The beauty of the public service for example would be destroyed, and the practice of the people praying after the minister would be abrogated for it "wasteth time, and also maketh an unpleasant sound".²

Ironically, it is Hooker who can recall the Presbyterians to man's limitations. For they, in their zeal, have forgotten man's defects and imperfection. In Hooker's judgment it is from this apparent unawareness of man's real limitations that their many criticisms of present practice spring. In his view it follows directly from recognition of this limitation that "touching prayers for things earthly, we ought not to think that the Church hath

1. Ecc. Pol., V, xxvi, 1.

2. Ecc. Pol., V, xxxv, 1.

set down so many without cause."¹ It is by means of the "tender kindness" of the church that the weaker sort are helped towards their duty in this way, "although some few of the perfecter and stronger may be therewith for a time displeased."² Participation in public prayer for things whose value is evident to the common sort may gradually induce the weak to higher things by "heavenly fraud".³ Such inducements are not to be readily despised in man's present imperfect state.

The recognition of common imperfection informs many of the other prayers that are uttered in the rounds of religious ritual. Men may pray, therefore, for continual deliverance from adversity even though there is in Scripture "no promise that we shall be evermore free from vexations, calamities, and troubles".⁴ Such a prayer is not repugnant to God for one may pray without express promise as Jesus Christ himself

1. Ecc. Pol., V, xxxv, 2.

2. Ecc. Pol., V, xxxv, 2.

3. By such means "there stealeth upon them a double benefit: first because that good affection, which things of smaller account have once set on work, is by so much the more easily raised higher, and secondly, in that the very custom of seeking so particular aid and relief at the hands of God, doth by a secret contradiction withdraw them from endeavouring to help themselves by those wicked shifts which they know can never have his allowance, whose assistance their prayer seeketh. These multiplied petitions of worldly things in prayer have therefore, besides their direct use, a service whereby the Church underhand, through a kind of heavenly fraud, taketh therewith the souls of men as with certain baits." Ecc. Pol., V, xxxv, 2.

4. Ecc. Pol., V, xlvii, 1.

did.¹ Prayers of this kind are not contrary

'unto the natural will of God which wisheth to the works of his own hands in that they are his own handy work all happiness, although perhaps for some special cause in our own particular a contrary determination have seemed more convenient.'²

Similarly the prayer "that all men should be saved", to which the Presbyterians objected, is supported by the duty of Christian charity.³ Although it is true that it may not necessarily be granted, it is yet entirely acceptable. While, then, we have no

'personal knowledge touching vessels of wrath and mercy [and] what they are inwardly in the sight of God it skilleth not, for us there is cause sufficient in all men whereupon to ground our prayers unto God in their behalf.'⁴

Acknowledgment of common limitation directs Hooker's discussion to the conclusion that English practices in regard to prayer are paradigmatic in their rationality and acceptability. There is no necessary reason why participation in such practices should not be general. Public reason is clearly superior to the promptings of private desire.

The sacraments, of which instruction and prayer serve as "elements, parts, or principles" thereunto,⁵ partake of the character of both nature and super-nature.⁶ However,

1. Ecc. Pol., V, xlvii, 4,5.

2. Ecc. Pol., V, xlvii, 11.

3. Ecc. Pol., V, xlix, 1.

4. Ecc. Pol., V, xlix, 3.

5. Ecc. Pol., V, 1, 1.

6. I have not attempted to discuss the difficult theological problem of the nature of the Incarnation. For a short examination, see chapters 14 and 15 of J. S. Marshall's Hooker and the Anglican Tradition, London, 1963.

they are, "by reason of their mixed nature, are more diversely interpreted, and disputed of than any other part of religion besides."¹ Their main force, nonetheless, is, in Hooker's view, supernatural. For him, God's gift of grace is given primarily through the sacraments. In participating in the sacraments men come to share in God's supernatural gifts. In this sense the sacraments constitute the main step in restoring the broken unity between God and man. They confer upon man the gifts of the redeemed humanity of Christ the Mediator - the God-Man. "Christ is therefore both as God and as man that true vine whereof we both spiritually and corporally are branches."²

There is, then, a particular correspondence between the sacraments and God's grace. The elements declare not something past but something now being effected by God. They are not to be taken "for bare resemblances or memorials of things absent, neither for naked signs and testimonies assuring us of grace received before".³ Receiving the sacraments, however, did not necessarily mean that grace was being bestowed. Unless the duties prescribed by the sacraments are continually performed, such participation in these practices may, in Hooker's opinion, prove in the end to be "unprofitable". Following previous remarks, salvation, Hooker holds, is not merely attained by faith alone but also by good works.

1. Ecc. Pol., V, lvii, 2.

2. Ecc. Pol., V, lvi, 9.

3. Ecc. Pol., V, lvii, 5.

While, therefore, the use of the sacraments may be in man's hands, the effect is God's conditional promise. The correspondence, in short, is not one of strict necessity.

The sacraments have uses that pertain strictly to the world of time. These uses to be sure are secondary, but they do have a certain significance. Indeed, in Hooker's judgment, they constitute the central visible signs of a community's Christian identity. Generally

'they serve as bonds of obedience to God, strict obligations to the mutual exercise of Christian charity, provocations to godliness, preservations from sin, memorials of the principal benefits of Christ; respect the time of their institution, and it thereby appeareth that God hath annexed them for ever unto the New Testament, as other rites were before with the Old; regard the weakness which is in us, and they are warrants for the more security of our belief; compare the receivers of them with such as receive them not, and sacraments are marks of distinction to separate God's own from strangers.'¹

To change, amongst other things, the character of the sacraments and their place in Christian ritual would, in other words, amount to a change in the identification as to who were strangers and fellows in the world. For Hooker the problem of determining how someone became a committed member of a religious community was solved by baptism. In this act the god-parents made certain promises on behalf of the child which bound him for life. From an ecclesiastical point of view a contractual relationship was established between the child and the church from which there was no receding. The sacraments became a "public duty".² Obligation to the church was a sign of membership in that particular community.

1. Ecc. Pol., V, lvii, 2.

2. Ecc. Pol., V, lxii, 15.

When one "came of age", there was no particular change in one's identity. More visible strenuous efforts were not necessarily required.

Such "passive" acceptance in adulthood was not enough for the Presbyterians. A change in the nature and position of the sacraments in the English community was amongst their demands. They, in effect, desired a new identification of strangers and fellows, sinners and saints. They required that the sacraments be taken as mere seals and tokens of a covenant between God and man. In short, they took a receptionist view of the sacraments as signs or seals of that which is wrought by faith. More active signs of membership in a religious community were in their view necessary, and formal adherence by an adult was inadequate without a public profession of faith or without a period of intensive participation in specified activities.

For Hooker the Church was an inclusive sacramental fellowship. Its "minimum" basis was the necessary reception of the sacraments. It is from such a position that the detailed criticisms of baptism put forward by the Presbyterians were answered in equal detail by him. He himself pointed out the dangers of depending on God's secret election alone.¹ He denied that the practice of putting questions to the child

1. It "is but a self-deceiving vanity" so to do. Ecc. Pol., V, lx, 3.

in baptism was foolish and without importance.¹ He defended too the use of the cross in baptism.² During this long controversy we come to realize that, informing all these detailed criticisms, replies and counter-replies of both Hooker and the Presbyterians, are different ideas as to membership of a religious community and the identity of such an association in the world. The difference is, in one sense, between a conservative view of the world as the best of all possible places (this side of Heaven) and a radical stand-point as to the corruptness of the present world. From the latter position the point is to reform the world, to recall it to its previous perfection. The former view assumes that the world is never beyond repair even though its resources may be limited. Between the two there was often, as Hooker realized, little fellow feeling.

1. See the general discussion of interrogatives in baptism. Ecc. Pol., V, lxiv, 1-6.
2. This subject too is discussed at some length. Ecc. Pol., V, lxv, 1-21.

AUTHORITY IN THE
ENGLISH COMMONWEALTH

To be a member of English society involves, in Hooker's estimation, not merely acknowledging its customs and practices, but also recognizing the authenticity of its political authority. For that authority determines the conditions of membership, it guarantees the unity and common good of English society. To dispute its acts without forethought may endanger the peace of that society and lead to confusion. A pious attitude to such authority is, therefore, required, for such an attitude is an important aspect of a general affirmation and enjoyment of what is good in the world. Yet this precarious gift of peace and prosperity may rapidly be destroyed by pride and greed. The prideful man himself is enamoured only of his own creation and cannot accept the good when it comes to him as a gift. He is surly about gifts. He has not developed a proper attitude of respect towards authority. In a world created by numerous past generations he is an agent of destruction, and political unity is his first victim.

A certain basic unity, then, is, in Hooker's mind, necessary for any political order. Among the natural law theorists, however, unity was often held to be the product of the right ordering of society, whereby individuals were

arranged in Aristotelian fashion so that each could discharge his proper function. Society, consequently, was not only a hierarchy of skills but also a degree of knowing in a moral sense, for only the educated and the wise were aware of the requirements of ruling. In Hooker's words:

'Without order there is no living in public society; because the want thereof is the mother of all confusion, whereupon division of necessity followeth, and out of division inevitable destruction. The Apostle therefore giving instructions to public societies, requireth that all things be orderly done. Order can have no place in things unless it can be settled amongst the persons that shall by office be conversant about them. And if things or persons be ordered, this doth imply that they are distinguished by degrees. For order is a gradual disposition.'¹

He goes on to conclude from these remarks that

'the very Deity itself both keepeth and requireth for ever this to be kept as a law, that whatsoever there is a coagmentation of many, the lowest be knit to the highest by that which being interjacent may cause each to cleave unto other, and so all to continue one.'²

Public societies have complete authority and power over themselves.³ Whatever may be their historical origins, this is true of all societies. Supreme authority in any society may rest with one, or few, or many. Power may be held by conquest, by God's "special appointment", or by consent. All these arrangements may be said in some way to command God's approbation, a notion which is a reflection of a passage in Scripture, namely, Romans XIII, "the powers that be are ordained of God". Authority has in part a sacred character

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, ii, 2.

2. Ecc. Pol., VIII, ii, 2.

3. Ecc. Pol., VIII, ii, 5.

that does not derive merely from its historical origin. The status and value of authority, therefore, is never dependent entirely on human will and action alone. For, since the metaphor of the Great Chain circumscribes all activity within the world, there is ever present a divine element in authority, even political authority, though such a notion is far from the divine right patriarchalism of the seventeenth century. Another metaphorical ^{element} is there the "principal subject".¹

The manner in which the human and divine elements are brought into harmony and co-operation Hooker seeks to illustrate by an analogy or a correspondence. It is employed by him to show, if not precisely to demonstrate, that political authority, though established by human will and action, still has in itself a character that transcends this merely human foundation. The passage runs as follows.

'The law appointeth no man to be an husband, but if a man have betaken himself unto that condition, it giveth him the authority over his own wife. That the christian world should be ordered by kingly regiment, the law of God doth not anywhere command; and yet the law of God doth give them right, which once are exalted to that estate, to exact at the hands of their subjects general obediences in whatsoever affairs their power may serve to command. So God doth ratify the work of that Sovereign authority which kings have received by men.'²

1. For the idea of principal subject see this work, chapter ten.
2. Ecc. Pol., VIII, ii, 6. The analogy is also employed by Suarez. See A. P. D'Entreves, Richard Hooker: A Study in the History of Political Philosophy, Oxford, 1932, p.149, n.52.
[D. Phil. thesis]

Although all the princes of this world, then, may be said to rule by divine approbation, their power (and therefore to some degree their authority) is dependent upon its origins and upon present circumstances. In England the people, in Hooker's view, have willingly consented to establish a political association and to work out its arrangements. In this instance the ruler remains in a position of dependence upon the community. "So that it standeth for an axiom in this case, the King is major singulis, universis minor".¹ Since he was not concerned with the difficult investigation of the concept of authority nor generally speaking with the notion of the derivation of power and authority from a communal act, Hooker at this point deliberately restricts the field of enquiry.

'That we be not enforced to make over-large discourses about the different conditions of sovereign or supreme power, that which we speak of kings should be with respect to the state and according to the nature of this kingdom.'²

Obviously, then, Hooker's discussion is directed towards a particular constitution, a particular set of political arrangements. He does, however, ask one pertinent question in regard to authority and consent, namely, may a body political withdraw its consent entirely to a duly enacted authority if it finds that authority burdensome and bloody-minded in its operation? The short and convenient answer (for Hooker) is that

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, ii, 7.

2. Ecc. Pol., VIII, ii, 7.

'It must be presumed, that supreme governors will not in such case oppose themselves, and be stiff in detaining that, the use whereof is with public detriment: but surely without their consent I see not how the body should be able by any just means to help itself, saving when dominion doth escheat. Such things therefore must be thought upon before-hand, that power may be limited ere it be granted.'¹

In short, therefore, if the ruler does not agree or assent, there is no way of justly (that is, with the agreement of all) dissolving a political association. Presumably, if all can agree to constitutionally dissolve, then it may be said that some trace of a political order yet remains. It is thus logically impossible to voluntarily dissolve a political association.² The next best, Hooker suggests, is constitutional limitation. But this is something very different.³

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, ii, 10.
2. It is equally impossible, therefore, to legislate one into existence. The state is essentially not a voluntary society, and the notion of consensual origins is quite incoherent. And when an association founds on the rocks of necessity, it has little to do with constitutionally dissolving such arrangements but with "appeals to God". In effect the strong form of external accountability (i.e. the non-political) reappears. This position, Hooker is at pains to point out, is inappropriate in the present circumstances.
3. J. R. Lucas defines the two ideals of constitutional rule as constitutional criticism and constitutional limitation. The former takes its stand on those common values which constitute the essential character of the community. The latter specifies on paper the limits of authority for as long as the community exists. Hooker seemingly endeavours to combine both (or merely confuses them) without being able to call on a written constitution or "articles of compact".

Constitutional rule in the Ecclesiastical Polity is naturally closely bound up with the character of sixteenth and seventeenth century constitutionalism in general. A constitution itself may be characterized as a set of political arrangements determinate in space and time. Such a constitution arranges various tasks and duties among a number of offices which together constitute the structure of that political association. Constitutions in this sense may be classified, in the common distinction, as written or unwritten. We shall have little to remark on written constitutions since they do not come within Hooker's purview. Usually, however, written constitutions may be said to reflect thought concerned at a somewhat abstract level with the question of arrangements of offices and apportionment of power. In short, they offered a ready-made solution to the problem of order.¹ But written constitutions were familiar only for the reason that such instruments did not endure for long. They became lost in the passing of time. The frequency of written constitutions may, therefore, be taken as a sign of instability, and not of perfect regimes in action.

Unwritten constitutions were likewise concerned with

1. A written constitution may be seen as an endeavour to confine a constitution in space. It appears to depend on a behaviouristic notion of human action. See in general K. Thompson, "Constitutional Theory and Political Action", The Journal of Politics, vol.31, 1969, and more speculatively N. Jacobson, "Political Science and Political Education", American Political Science Review, vol.57, 1963.

the arrangement of authority and power. Such, however, was the history of English politics that limitations to royal authority and power played an equally important part. Consequently, the rule of law in England is, or was, concerned with what the limitations on government action ought to be, as well as where its authority might run. A constitution in this sense is a statement of the relations between public authority and the law, or, to put it more precisely, a statement, made by means of the law, of the relations between public authority and the individual. This manner of constitutional rule, as has been frequently pointed out, is predominantly medieval in its origins and post-medieval in its established operation (when the privileges granted to a few became the "inherent" rights of all). In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries such thinking became increasingly important since in a number of the states of western Europe the relations between the public authorities and various groups or institutions became strained and subject to increasing criticism.

These controversies gave rise to a number of discussions about the character of particular associations and of various details in regard to those associations. The notions employed to justify these arguments were often quite different from those theories of the political community which occupied the attention of more abstract thought. For these notions were concerned not with the political community (that is, with its general character), but with

law; and not, for the most part, with law as a universal concept, but with the existence of particular bodies of law in historical associations. Here is a significant difference between "classical" political and constitutional thought, for, while the former centered its attention on the nature of political society in general, the latter was concerned with justification of provincial and national bodies of law. In the Ecclesiastical Polity Hooker endeavours to utilize both modes of argumentation in justifying English arrangements.¹ On the one side, he continues to employ classical terminology, on the other side, as he proceeds, it becomes apparent how much he relies on the traditional nature of the English constitution and on English constitutional thought. We have, consequently, a constant movement back and forth from particular to general concepts, and there is revealed a gap between natural law and constitutional thought that Hooker's rhetoric seeks to, but cannot bridge.

Now the humanists and the jurists were most particularly concerned with constitutional thought, and Hooker, quite clearly, was greatly influenced by his contact with the lawyers of the Middle Temple. It would, however, be

1. Thus the English notion of the rule of law is converted into a principle of constitutional limitation imparted into the English constitution at its inception (whenever that was). In this way the English rule of law is made coincidental with the abstract or theoretical notions of contract and natural law.

too schematic to oppose the jurist and the theologian. For, when we speak of constitutional thought and "classical" or theoretical thought, it must be remembered that the two are but logical aspects or categories of thinking about politics, which, in reality, may be found side by side in the work of any one thinker. Thus, Hooker, while he may have considered it as important feature of his project to reiterate points of significance in classical political thought, was much more anxious about the English constitution, its formation and its transmission in time. It is true that the traditional nature of the English constitution with its notion of non-sacred time is subsumed under the classical theory of the origin and character of political society and under the sacred notions of time and eternity propounded in Christian theology. However, the problem of political arrangements in time is the problem of change, and the problem generated by change is the problem of the order of political particulars.

What, then is the position of the ruler in England with regard to "power of dominion?" What does the king's "dependence upon that whole entire body, over the several parts whereof he hath dominion" amount to?¹ Well, we must make a distinction between consent and election for Hooker condemned notions of virtual election of every king who appeared to acquire his throne by hereditary succession.

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, ii, 7.

He considered them to be "strange, untrue and unnatural conceits, sent abroad by seeds-men of rebellion."¹ Yet in the preceeding passage Hooker had repeated with approval one of the fundamental principles expressed in the Vindiciae contra Tyrannos, "rex major singulis, universis minor."

However, the use to which such a principle is put depends in part at least on the disposition of the disputant, and in Hooker the principle is entirely latent.² Thus, while he admitted that it was true that there was a sense in which the king had received his power from the community as a whole, this had been an original donation. Cicero, for instance, had denied that this made every king subordinate to the corporate power of the people. With this

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, ii, 8.
2. This principle and others taken from Roman Law inform the radical import of the Vindiciae. Its author employs in a quite radical sense the notion of joint tutorship of a nation. Into the gap left by the extinction of external accountability on the part of the Empire and Papacy, enter these notions of active constitutional limitation. In the Vindiciae these co-tutors are in fact ephor-like magistrates ("optimates") and they are under an obligation to resist potentially tyrannous actions by the monarch. See A Defence of Liberty Against Tyrants: a translation of the Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos by Junius Brutus, introduction by H. Laski, London, 1924, p.200. Here it may be interesting to note a contrast between French Protestant thought and English radical Protestantism. In Huguenot thought the emphasis falls on constitutional limitation, and Michael Walzer judges that "mere private persons have no role in Huguenot theory". The Revolution of the Saints, p.56. Hooker himself concluded that the English radical Protestants had no awareness of a public role and no conception of what political duty involved.

Hooker agrees, for, while the principle provided a latent sanction for authority, it did not mean that every successive king had first to be empowered by his subjects. It, in short, did not reveal how a political society ought to be organized, and it did not justify rebellion. Hooker, however, perceived a radical import in much of Huguenot thought, and in this he was not mistaken.¹

In describing the authority of the ruler as being derived from an act of original consent, or contract, Hooker was following a traditional argument that has its origins in "classical" thought. Whatever the merits or demerits of such an argument, it was not particularly useful for Hooker's own position, since he himself was faced with a somewhat similar notion of a sacred act of foundation in regard to the arrangements of the godly community. In actuality, the authority of an office, institution or even a church is an endowment from the past to the present. It becomes what it is by a recognition of what are considered to be its achievements over a lengthy period of time, and not by a single acknowledgment of its having been instituted, divinely or otherwise, at some distant date. Hooker, we may consider, recognized this although he was unwilling to part with other justifications of authority which appeared

1. For the influence of Huguenot thought on English political thinking, see J. H. M. Salmon, The French Religious Wars in English Political Thought, Oxford, 1959.

not incoherent in his eyes.

Consider the following remarks:

'Touching kings which were first instituted by agreement and composition made with them over whom they reign, how far their power may lawfully extend, the articles of compact between them must show: not the articles only of compact at the first beginning, which for the most part are either clean worn out of knowledge, or else known unto very few, but whatsoever hath been after in free and voluntary manner condescended unto, whether by express consent, whereof positive laws are witnesses, or else by silent allowance famously notified through custom reaching beyond the memory of man.'¹

Although we have here an apparent mixture of both arguments concerning authority, we are compelled to ask what has become of or what actual importance is attached to the notion of foundation. The answer is, practically speaking, nothing. Consequently, although Hooker has occasion to mention the so-called "articles of compact", he gives no indication as to what he means by that term, and it is not certain whether he is referring to a written constitution; and if he is not, then what? In any case, this uncertainty hardly matters to a great extent for, in regard to this position he wishes to put forward, the "original conveyance" could never become "a sufficient consideration wherefore [the king's] power should always depend on that from which it did then flow."²

The classical notion of foundation is, then, substantially modified by Hooker, and so too is the idea of a constitution as a mode of order fixed in space and

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, ii, 11.

2. Ecc. Pol., VIII, ii, 9.

protected from the encroachments of time. For in the Ecclesiastical Polity, while not one of these notions is in theory abandoned, Hooker in practice did not hold that political arrangements were necessarily corrupted by change. Political authority itself takes its place as both the creator and the product of this space-time order. Clearly it is a matter of where emphasis is placed, and in the Ecclesiastical Polity such emphasis is to be located in the importance that the historical growth of particular communities attain. What authority amounts to in the present is, therefore, what is significant for political order. Moreover, contrary to the idea of violent transition from one constitution to another, Hooker even admits that kingdoms founded by conquest may grow or gradually change

'unto that most sweet form of kingly government which philosophers define to be "regency willingly sustained and endured with chiefly of power in the greatest of things."¹

It would appear, then, that in England at least custom and continual practice, if not the most perfect, are the best guides to action. Hooker is not offering a definition of authority to be sure, for he is far more concerned with the origin and efficacy of authority in practice; and in practice authority has many sources. Yet, in Hooker's mind, the authority that a particular institution possesses is not something that may be praised on every occasion.

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, ii, 11.
The quotation in this passage is from Aristotle, Politics, Bk. 3, sect. 1.

For, even among monarchies as such, there are many forms and these may be estimated as to their desirability.

In a well-ordered commonwealth, the authority of the monarch is and ought to be limited. For Hooker himself is

'not of the opinion that simply always in kings the most, but the best limited is best: the most limited is that which may deal in fewest things, the best, that which in dealing is tied unto the soundest, perfectest and most indifferent rule; which rule is the law; I mean not only the law of nature and of God, but very national or municipal law consonant thereunto.'¹

For the English constitution itself Hooker had the highest regard. He was particularly concerned to defend and indeed, to commend the practical skill of those who had achieved or had helped to achieve the present order of the English polity, for, although every person and every cause in that society was subject to the king's authority,

'yet so is the power of the king over all and in all limited, that unto all his proceedings the law itself is a rule.'²

That law makes the king and that the king's grant of any favour contrary to the law is invalid, are axioms of that variety of monarchy adhered to in England. While, however, Hooker highly valued law and the order that flowed from the imposition of good law, he by no means conceived of order and regularity as the only goods of political associations or the only virtues of positive law. In

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, ii, 12.

2. Ecc. Pol., VIII, ii, 13.

particular, though the public good may depend greatly on the power of making laws, in well-ordered communities, "yea though they be monarchies", care should always be taken that the political body "do not clean resign herself and make over this power to making laws wholly into the hands of any one".¹ The manner in which Hooker conceived the working of this limited rule is most clearly described in his own works:

'What power the king hath he hath it by law, the bounds and limits of it are known; the entire community giveth general order by law how all things publicly are to be done, so the king as head thereof, the highest in authority over all, causeth according to the same law every particular to be framed and ordered thereby. The whole body politic maketh laws, which laws give power unto the king, and the king having bound himself to use according unto law that power, it so falleth out, that the execution of the one is accomplished by the other in most religious and peaceable sort.'²

Clearly, in Hooker's judgment, that which describes limited monarchy in general applies to the English constitution in particular. It presents a model, if not to be imitated, at least to be admired.

The English constitution, however, is not merely subject to limitation. It is "balanced" as well. In a passage to be found in Book Seven of the Ecclesiastical Polity Hooker described this constitution as a

'three-fold cable, consisting of the king as supreme head over all, of peers and nobles under him, and

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, ii, 8.

2. Ecc. Pol., VIII, viii, 9.

of the people under them.¹

The co-operation of the several parts of the body politic - "this conjunction of estates" - is the very essence of its unity, and this unity is represented and enforced by Parliament. Parliament and convocation are "that whereupon the very essence of all government within this kingdom doth depend".² In parliament, Hooker includes the king as well as the personal representatives of his subjects, but he also clearly approves of the fact that the power to make law is divided between them. In this he was following and developing a tradition that could be traced back to Bracton. A later representative Sir Thomas Smith in 1565 affirmed that Parliament represented the "most high and absolute power of the realme of England", it "hath the power of the whole realm both the head and the body".³ He meant, of course, the king-in-Parliament,

1. Ecc. Pol., VII, xviii, 10.

See also Ecc. Pol., VIII, ii, 12. Here Hooker writes: "Happier that people whose law is their king in the greatest things, them that whose king is himself the law. Where the king doth guide the state, and the law the king, that commonwealth is like a harp or melodious instrument, the strings whereof are turned and handled all by one, following as laws the rules and canons of musical science."

2. Ecc. Pol., VIII, vi, 11.

3. Sir Thomas Smith, De Republica Anglorum, ed. W. Alston, Cambridge, 1906, pp. 48-49.

but in any case the clear implication was that the king's power alone, although perhaps of the greatest importance, was not absolute.

In accord with these general views Hooker approved not only of the existence of a body of positive law in general, but also of its directly "representative" origin. King (or Queen)-in-Parliament is conceived by Hooker as, ideally, the representative of the whole society, that part of the whole body politic which aimed at providing conditions in which the good of all may be pursued. He argued that, since the good proper to each individual is an aspect of, though not identical with, the common good,

'besides that which moveth each man in particular to seek his private, there must of necessity in all public societies be also a general mover, directing unto the common good, and framing every man's particular to it. The end whereunto all government was instituted, was "bonum publicum", the universal and common good. Our question is of dominion, for that end or purpose derived unto one.'¹

Conflicts of particular interests may, however, occur between estates as well as between particular individuals; and, if one estate were allowed to enact laws for the rest, it is easy to see how dangerous this might prove the unity of the political order. Consequently,

'Peace and justice are maintained by preserving unto every order their rights, and by keeping all estates as it were in an even balance.'²

Hooker goes on to argue that the best way of doing this is to give to the crown, "their common parent, whose care is

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, ii, 18.

2. Ecc. Pol., VIII, vi, 8.

presumed to extend most indifferently over all", the authority to rule.¹

For practical purposes, then, Hooker's ideal embraced both the Tudor emphasis on royal authority and the idea of the supremacy of the law. This ideal barred in theory at least any clear-cut notion of sovereignty. Elizabethan ideas left undecided the question: which law if there was a clash - that of Crown (*lex coronae*) or that of the kingdom in general (*lex parliamenti*) - was to have the "higher" authority? A clash, however, was merely a supposition, a supposition with which Hooker did not feel it part of his present purpose to deal. His constant theme is the importance of king-in-parliament and of the rule of law, which meant government according to procedures duly recognized as authentic.² What Tudor governments

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, vi, 8.

2. Each thinking on authority need not, of course, be a direct reflection of Elizabeth's views on such matters, and C. Cross conjectures that Hooker did not publish the later books as they would have offended the Queen. [The Royal Supremacy in the Elizabethan Church, London, 1969, p.36.] She suggests that Hooker had reached a "philosophical impasse" since his view of the royal supremacy did not agree with Elizabeth's. This is misleading for Hooker was not writing in support of Elizabeth's opinions but to justify the legal structure of the English Commonwealth and of the immediate relationship of the Church to that Commonwealth. How the Queen attempted to manipulate this structure is, if not entirely another matter, at least irrelevant to Hooker's immediate purpose.

did achieve, "quite unwittingly at times, was to make the concept of a rule of law an autonym for arbitrary discretion in governance and a synonym for due process". They "transformed the medieval principle of lawful procedure into that of due process, and they transmuted that unique notion, the supremacy of law, into "the certain rule of law".¹ It was such a development that in time occasioned a clash between crown and parliament. In the Ecclesiastical Polity, however, Hooker's emphasis on the rule of law in no way "anticipates" the likelihood of such a clash.

In Hooker's judgment, then, the Elizabethan Church Settlement and the ecclesiastical arrangements of the English Church were established by due process of law. That is, those arrangements were attended to within the traditional pattern of the rule of law. They are, therefore, authentic, and they are in no way contrary to the law of God and the law of nature. The Presbyterians, consequently, cannot by any "necessity" impugn the law of England. Obedience is required of them. If they are unable to change the present arrangements of the English polity in parliament (and that included obtaining the Queen's consent), then they may not change it at all.

The importance which Hooker places on institutions and on the authority of Queen-in-Parliament has led some commentators, H. F. Kearney in particular, to conclude that

1. W. H. Dunham, Jr., "Regal Power and the Rule of Law: A Tudor Paradox", Journal of British Studies, vol. III, no. 2, 1964, p. 56.

Hooker ended "implicitly, if not explicitly, with law as the will of the Crown, the voice of a scarcely disguised positivist public reason". He continues:

"At this point, one again wonders what divides Hooker's position from that of Hobbes, who argued

"That law can never be against Reason, our lawyers are agreed. And it is true, but the doubt is, of whose Reason it is, that shall be received for law. It is not meant of any private reason: for then there would be as much contradiction in the Lawes as there is in the "Schooles". And therefore it is not that "Iuris providentia" of wisdom of subordinate judges; but the Reason of this our Artificial Man, the Commonwealth and his Command that maketh law."

A political theory which emphasizes authority almost to the extinction of reason and which defends the cause of a "supreme governor" in all causes, both ecclesiastical and civil, can hardly be Thomist in spirit. It is in the medieval tradition, but rather in that of Marsilio than Thomas. The real defenders of the rights of the Church against the State, and who therefore were nearer to the traditionally medieval position, were those whom Hooker was attacking - the puritan divines, Travers and Cartwright.¹

Kearney's final conclusion is that

"The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity is thoroughly Elizabethan in its clothing of radical change in traditional forms. The voice may be the voice of Thomas but on occasions the hands are remarkably like those of Hobbes."²

Although (despite many dubious remarks) this illuminates something of the direction of Hooker's argument, Kearney is formally in error for he appears to disregard the context of Hooker's thought altogether. This, in theory, is important for in the midst of his exposition of the Royal Supremacy, Hooker considers that there are proper limits

1. H. F. Kearney, "Richard Hooker: A Reconsideration", Cambridge Journal, vol. 5, 1952, p. 310.

2. Ibid., p. 311

(imposed by nature and not merely by the English notion of the rule of law which is conventional) not only to the powers of rulers over subjects, but also to the scope of human decisions in political action, and to the competence of human skill in providing laws for the Church and Commonwealth. With regard to the scope and context of positive law it is clear that the discussion in Book Eight, as elsewhere, moves, formally at least, within the limits set by natural and revealed law. Consequently, Hooker insists that human laws must have some rational connection with the necessary principles of natural law and with divine law. In short, constitutional thinking is subsumed under the precepts decreed by the Christian/classical tradition to be true and necessary; and the principles present in English constitutional's thought have thus a rational essence which may be derived from Nature. Yet what appears as inherently reasonable in positive law is often in the Ecclesiastical Polity the product of human wisdom and judgment. It is true, moreover, that Hooker does not, indeed logically cannot, immediately link this chain of reasoning with his argument that the Presbyterians are obliged to obey the laws of England. Despite the "reasonableness" of its content, consent and due enactment must be given to provide the sufficient ground for an obligation to obey every human law that ought to be obeyed.

Now, as we have seen, this distinction between legally enacted law and rational essence could be used by the

Presbyterians for their own purposes. That is, they could claim a radical form of external accountability against the English constitution. They could argue that a human law need not be considered reasonable merely because it is a law; nor consequently that obligation to obey a law is necessary merely because it had been duly enacted and has the force of law. Such thinking, however, is met by the distinction between necessity and indifference, and by the emphasis on institutional continuity. In this way all forms of radical or "strong" external accountability are undercut. Whilst formally a law must have some minimum of "necessary" rationality if it is to claim the obedience of irrational men, yet, since law and order are good in themselves (for "without order there is no living in public society"), the emphasis in the Ecclesiastical Polity falls on the reasonableness of traditional institutions and customary activity. There is, of course, a formal connection between the two points which the circular argument protects from outside attack. Hooker can, consequently, have his classical and constitutional cakes and eat them together without being overcome by the incoherent mixture.

To be fair to Kearney, however, there is a sense in which he is perfectly correct. For, despite the emphasis on the rational content of positive law, it is one of the recurring motives of Hooker's notions about law to assert as strongly as possible the full and complete power of the human legislator within the limits of divine and natural law. It is clear enough, at any rate, that the obligation of human law is not merely dependent upon the objective

standard of Nature which they ostensibly embody, but also upon the will of legislator which supports and sanctions them. Yet in the main in Book One he subscribes to the notion that "Laws do not only teach what is good, but they enjoin it, they have in them a certain constraining force", and he adds that "laws do not take their constraining force from the quality of such as devise them, but from that power which doth give them the strength of law".¹ In Book Eight, however, the evident lack of force of this position in practice is revealed by the emphasis that Hooker considers must be placed on human authority. Thus human laws, however reasonable and wisely drafted, take their force "by solemn voice of sovereign authority".

'In devising and discussing of laws, wisdom is specially required; but that which establish and maketh them, is power, even power of dominion; the chieftly whereof (amongst us) resteth in the person of the king.'²

We have, then, two notions of the origin of authority and obligation. In "classical" political thought the authority of human law stems from its rational content. In constitutional thought authority is an attribute of the

1. Ecc. Pol., I, x, 7, 8.

2. Ecc. Pol., VIII, vi, 12.

will of the sovereign.¹ This authority that the ruler possesses flows from his office and not from his private person; and the authority that constitutional arrangements generally possess is the product of achievement over time. Comments directed at these arrangements need necessarily have little connection with "classical" political thought at all. Constitutional thought, however, can be accommodated to some degree into thinking of a more abstract character. In this regard, as we have seen, Nature and Reason in the Ecclesiastical Polity may act as a context for argument over particulars. Consequently, what may appear as apparent incoherencies, can be accommodated within the circular structure of the Great Chain of Being. Stress between context and content need not thus reach problematic proportions such that either content or context has to be abandoned entirely.

1. The dichotomy is somewhat artificial in that medieval philosophy was not monolithic for there was a nominalistic tradition which stressed will in law and authority. The distinction, however, is not entirely false in that constitutional thought need not have any connection with either of the strands of medieval philosophy. Although, there is an apparent similarity between nominalism and constitutionalism, such similarity neglects the levels at which they operate. Oakeshott in his introduction to Hobbes' Leviathan (Oxford, Blackwell, 1946, p.xii) specifies that "there are three main patterns which philosophical reflection about politics has impressed upon the intellectual history of Europe". The master concepts of these three are Reason and Nature, Will and Artifice, and Rational Will. But this distinction is meant to operate only at the highest level of generality. At lower levels political thought shows a greater diversity.

AUTHORITY IN THE
ENGLISH CHURCH

It may be recalled that the Presbyterians maintained in essence the existence of two entirely separate spheres of existence with two respective types of law and conduct: the divine as alone revealed in the Scriptures, and the purely "natural" law of the mundane world. The former was the focus for all human activity, the latter had, in fact, no real and lasting place in a Christian community. They, therefore, distinguished absolutely Church from Commonwealth as two separate kingdoms. The Church itself enjoys a rigid unchanging form, divine in origin, purpose and function, while the Commonwealth is a purely mundane phenomenon, alterable according to circumstances, and not divine in character. Nonetheless in a true Christian community the Commonwealth should be arranged in such a fashion that the supremacy of the Church over the Commonwealth would be ensured. The Scriptures, not duly enacted legal statute, are, for the Presbyterian, the criterion for all Christian conduct, and an ample, indeed a complete, guide to any action whatsoever. Human reason was incapable of effective action in the face of evil. To Hooker such an attitude to political and ecclesiastical order endangered the traditional

authority of the Church in England, and we shall trace in this chapter his own view of the inter-relationship of church and commonwealth in English society.

To refute the Presbyterian case and to demonstrate or show that its doctrines would destroy English society as it was traditionally constituted, Hooker had to do much more than to accuse them of being irrational in general. He had to prove that they struck at the foundations of all authority, especially in regard to English society. To this end he was compelled to argue that disobedience to ecclesiastical law undermined the political order of English society as much as a breach of any other law. This involved showing that the ecclesiastical polity of England and, indeed, the civil polity itself were not inconsistent with, nor necessarily opposed to the laws of God and the laws of nature. If this could be proved to be the case, then neither conscience nor reason could require men to disobey, and undermine and undo the achievements of past generations.

Hooker's answer to the Presbyterian argument for the "higher" authority of church over commonwealth amounted to a development and an extension of the distinction between necessity and indifference, between moral and rational absolutes and the demands of circumstance, between the individual before God and the individual in an institutional setting. His own institutional ideal was that of a united church integrally joined to a unified commonwealth, and

such, indeed, is a description of the English polity as Hooker was inclined to regard it. The radical Protestant attacks on hierarchy and traditional authority would, he argued, reduce this order that England possesses into "several impaled authorities."¹ In this way religious conduct (in its external attributes at least) is seen to be as much an aspect of English constitutional arrangements as more characteristically political actions. For, to Hooker and to most if not all of his contemporaries, religion constituted the main moral support of political unity.² At this level, that of institutional order, religion was of, or took on, a "political" character. It followed, therefore, that the political authority, as the protector of the commonwealth, had an interest in who was teaching and preaching publicly.³ This did not amount in Hooker's mind to a judgment that religion was or should be "a mere politic device". For such a view misses the fact that Christian is the true religion, and consequently no other religion, once Christianity had been propagated, would or indeed could suffice.

This general unity of civil and religious concerns and the coalescence of authority in English society is the position that Hooker seeks to justify. In endeavouring to refute the Presbyterian case in general and in particular, Hooker again finds it necessary to outline his own

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, i, 4.

2. See C. Russell, "Arguments for Religious Unity in England, 1530-1650," The Journal of Ecclesiastical History, vol.18, 1967.

3. Ecc. Pol., V, i, 2.

presuppositions concerning the nature of reality, law and the individual. However, the individual under consideration at this point is the Christian, of whom he writes:

'The law of nature and the law of God are sufficient for declaration in both what belongeth unto each [i.e. Christian] man separately, as his soul is the spouse of Christ, yea so sufficient, that they plainly and fully show whatsoever God doth require by way of necessary introduction unto the state of everlasting bliss. But as a man liveth joined with others in common society, and belongeth unto the outward politic body of the Church, albeit the said law of nature and of scripture have in this respect also made manifest the things that are of necessity; nevertheless, by reason of new occasions still arising which the Church having care of souls, must needs take for as need requireth, hereby it cometh to pass, that there is and ever will be great use even of human laws and ordinances, deducted by way of discourse as conclusions from the former divine and natural, serving for principles thereunto.'¹

What is of especial interest in this somewhat extended passage is the distinction which we have previously noted² between the individual as such and the individual as a member of a society, as a role player in an institutional setting. Clearly for Hooker the individual person is the fundamental unit of religious experiences. He regards it as a necessary fact of experience that every individual has some concern for his own salvation. Because this is the case, because salvation is individual, commitment to a religion must be regarded as logically preceeding membership of a merely political society.³ Religion, in theory,

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, vi, 5.

2. See this work chap. eleven.

3. A point made by A. S. McGrade to whose article "The Coherence of Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity": the Books on Power, Journal of the History of Ideas, vol. XXIV, 1963. I am greatly indebted for my understanding of Book Eight of the Ecclesiastical Polity.

is a matter of absolute choice.¹ Hooker gives an example of this line of thought in his treatment of the religious authority of the civil rulers before and after the conversion of Rome to Christianity. When the citizens of the Empire were pagan, their pagan rulers had the authority and power to order the arrangements of pagan religion. When "whole Rome" became Christian, its Christian rulers, according to Hooker, must necessarily have been conceded a like authority in matters of Christian religion.² Salvation is thus to be attained neither through obeying the commands of an earthly power nor by merely following the dictates of fashion. Presumably, if the rulers of the Roman Empire had not assented to the change in religious opinion, then a situation of "necessity" would have ensued for the Christians for they alone were in possession of the truth. Once, however, the Christian religion was adopted as the official religion, such a situation need not develop. Indeed, if rulers in general conduct themselves with the truth ever before their eyes, then no situation of this nature will be likely to arise in the future. Thus a rational acceptance of Christianity entails no absolute disobedience to civil authority. Since the rulers and the citizens of England profess the Christian religion,

1. I say in theory for in reality all rational roads now lead to Christianity.

2. Ecc. Pol., VIII, vi, 6.

since together they hold that religion "in gross", the government of Elizabeth may justly claim authority in ecclesiastical affairs.

Religion is ideally not a device for ensuring political success, and to "live well", in Hooker's view, is to live religiously. When, however, the individual "enters into" a political association, the need for individual salvation must be supplemented by laws and arrangements appropriate to his new situation. But, of course, the distinction between necessary and non-necessary rules does not parallel the distinction between individual principles and political laws. It is not the case, in short, that only individuals are subject to necessary and absolute principles, while the rules governing societies are all customary and conventional. For, as we have seen, Nature itself has specified what is required for existence in a political association. In practice, however, "new occasions" constantly arise which a community "must needs take order as need requireth." In such circumstances, natural and revealed law serve as principles and as guiding rules in determining the considerations involved. In other words, they provide the proper and necessary context for the politics of time. Argument of another character, however, is required to reach a particular practical conclusion that may, it is hoped bring order into historical circumstances.

Hooker, then, draws a distinction between the individual and the individual in society. He, moreover, believed that Church and Commonwealth are, by function, separate societies, but that, on occasion, of which he considered his own day to be an example, they could be united in a particular political and religious association. He thus assumed that not only do men generally have some regard for their salvation, but they also incorporate this concern in their association with each other. Citizens and Christians, consequently, may in certain cases be the same persons, and politics is fundamentally the concern of an association of persons, not of a band of zealots intent in the implementation of private aspirations without regard for other persons. If Hooker, in general, agrees with the Presbyterians in drawing a distinction between the temporal and the spiritual, he is yet able to argue, in England's particular case, that there is a coincidence of religious and political concerns in each of her subjects.

Now in asserting the unity of Church and Commonwealth in one association Hooker was endeavouring to give some justification for a position that was straightforwardly asserted in the Act of Supremacy.

'..... That the Queen's Highness is the only supreme governor of this realm as well as in all spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes temporal, and that no foreign prince, person, or prelate, state or potentate hath or ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual with this realm, and therefore I do

utterly renounce and forsake all foreign jurisdictions, powers, superiorities and authorities, and do promise that from henceforth I shall bear forth faith and true allegiance to the Queen Highness, her heirs and lawful successors.'¹

The nation was thus declared to be a self-sufficient and natural institutional unit. Henceforth religious association and political society were to form a unity with ultimate authority in the hands of a Christian prince; obedience and allegiance were "national".

Hooker considered that there was nothing in such an arrangement that necessarily invalidated this concern between church and commonwealth. In any case in most societies the civil government had always been concerned with religious as well as purely political matters.

'The heathen themselves had their spiritual laws, causes, and offices, always severed from their temporal; neither did this make two independent estates among them.'²

The difference between Christianity and other religions is, of course, the fact that Christianity is the true religion. Consequently if the members of a political society embrace the true religion, then that society is or becomes by definition a true church for

'.... the Church of Jesus Christ is every such public society of men, as doth in religion hold that truth which is proper to Christianity. As a politic society it doth maintain religion, as a church, that religion

1. G. R. Elton (ed.), The Tudor Constitution, Cambridge, 1960, p. 366.
2. Ecc. Pol., VIII, i, 4.

which God hath revealed by Jesus Christ.

With us therefore the name of a church importeth only a society of men, first united into some public form of regiment, and secondly distinguished from other societies by the exercise of the Christian religion.¹

In short, there exists in England one substance, that is society in general; and that substance has two accidents with their particular functions, namely commonwealth and church.²

With reference to their institutional arrangements Hooker alleges that all societies of his own day may be classified under three headings. There are infidel societies where church and society are two distinct bodies; Catholic societies, where church and society are one body, but where authority is divided between Pope and Emperor or King; and Anglican Society, where church and society are one body and authority is not in any way divided.³

Thus in England

'there is not any man of the Church of England but the same man is also a member of the Commonwealth, nor any man a member of the Commonwealth, which is not also of the Church of England.'⁴

In a metaphor that attempts to sum up the natural distinction between essence and accident Hooker continues,

'therefore as in a figure triangular the base doth differ from the sides thereof, and yet one and the

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, i, 2.

2. Ecc. Pol., VIII, i, 5.

3. Ecc. Pol., VIII, i, 7.

4. Ecc. Pol., VIII, i, 2.

self-same line is both a base and also a side; a side simply, a base if it chance to be the bottom and underlie the rest; so, albeit properties and actions of one kind do cause the name of a commonwealth, qualities and functions of another sort the name of a Church, to be given unto a multitude, yet one end the self-same multitude may in such sort be both, and is so with us, that no person appertaining to the one can be denied to be also of the other.¹

The arrangements that a society adopts and the authority it bestows are matters of things indifferent. That is, they are considerations of particular historical development, and methods of solving the problem of order. Order itself must be imposed for the absence of order is "the mother of all confusion". Therefore, there must of necessity be those who have authority and those whose duty it is to obey. Such an order is a hierarchy of "gradual disposition", to which the order of the entire universe, divine in origin and purpose, gives testimony. It is the function of authority to ensure the durability of this order and the disposition of society in general. Its instrument is power, and power is the ability to perform and enforce public actions. It "resides" in society and may be "given" to various of its members. In England the Crown has both spiritual and temporal supremacy, and this means that it has the power to command in religious and civil affairs. The monarch has no earthly superior; he is, in Hooker's words, "the highest uncommanded Commander".²

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, i, 2.

2. Ecc. Pol., VIII, ii, 3.

In general, Hooker follows the Act of Supremacy and defines the Royal Supremacy in England as

'that ruling authority, which neither any foreign state, nor yet any part of that body politic at home, wherein the same is established, can lawfully overrule.'¹

Since these are the institutional arrangements that England has adopted for the present occasion, and since such arrangements are clearly not contrary to any of the general stipulations of natural law, the Presbyterian insistence on the complete corruption of the church and on the necessity of return to a once existent ideal state is utterly illogical. For institutional arrangements occupy an area where necessary principles have no direct practical application as such. Thus what took place or is alleged to have taken place at a certain period in the past cannot be an absolute guide in regard to present arrangements at all. In short,

'as for supreme power in ecclesiastical affairs, the word of God doth nowhere appoint that all kings should have it, neither that any should not have it; for which cause it seemeth to stand altogether by human right, that unto Christian kings there is such dominion given.'²

The monarch, in ecclesiastical affairs as in civil, is, however, subject to the rule of law and bound on various occasions to consult parliament. Positive laws,

'whether by custom or otherwise established without repugnancy unto the law of God and nature, ought no

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, ii, 3.

2. Ecc. Pol., VIII, ii, 5.

less to be of force even in the spiritual affairs of the Church.¹

The necessity for order and the rule of law, then, supply a common foundation to a society of which both commonwealth and church are its accidents. They, church and commonwealth, share common underlying principles in regard to the necessity for institutions in conditions of imperfection. Consequently in English society, the only "difference of these two regiments, ecclesiastical and civil, consisteth in the matter about which the actions of each are conversant."² And "with us, one society is both the Church and the Commonwealth ... whole and entire ... under one chief Governor."³ It is true that church and commonwealth are distinct in function, but not (as the extreme Protestants would have it) in essence. It was, amongst other things, because the Presbyterians considered church and commonwealth as entirely distinct that they judged it necessary to destroy England's ecclesiastical arrangements in order to elevate their ministry into a distinct and higher society. Yet Hooker strongly asserts that any commonwealth which possesses the Christian religion "in gross", is a church; in its political aspects it is a "state",

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, ii, 17.

2. Ecc. Pol., VIII, i, 1.

3. Ecc. Pol., VIII, i, 1.

in its ecclesiastical a church. They both have institutional arrangements appropriate to that function and to the situation in which they find themselves. Finally, to Hooker, this identity of church and commonwealth was, in England's case, a fact, not merely a legal fiction. It is this situation which the Presbyterians were endangering for completely irrational reasons and from disreputable notions.

Moreover, Hooker asserts that there are positive advantages (of, indeed, a political nature) that flow from having a supreme authority or governor who is head both of church and commonwealth. For in such an arrangement it is impossible, if acts stem from the appropriate principles, to have a division of obligations. This identity, likewise, strengthens the institutional church in maintaining its authority and in reforming itself when occasion arises. For in conditions of imperfection merely spiritual discipline is hardly enough.

'The custom which many Christian churches have to fly to the civil magistrate for coercion of those that will not otherwise be reformed, - these things are proof sufficient that even in Christian religion the power wherewith ecclesiastical persons were endued at the first is unable to do of itself so much as when secular power doth strengthen it; and that, not by way of ministry or service, but of predominancy, such as the kings of Israel in their time exercised over the Church of God.'¹

Force, consequently, is legitimate in supporting or reforming the institutional arrangements of any church. It is, however, advantageous if the force required to effect

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, iii, 5.

reform is administered by a prince who is head both of commonwealth and church.

In arguing for the appropriateness of the headship of the church and the commonwealth being combined in one concrete person Hooker again utilizes as the distinction between necessity and indifference. As there are various modes or levels of existence that the church as a whole occupies, so there are definable authorities at the various levels of the church's existence. Since these distinctions are natural, the arguments proffered by the extreme Protestants that the Sovereign or Head of the Church in England (merely by using those terms) is usurping the power of Christ are complete misrepresentations of reality. For the headship that Christ exercises over the church is different in "order, measure and kind" from that exercised by the Queen in England.¹ He differs in order because the church He rules comprises the mystical as well as the institutional church. The power to rule over this expanse has been granted to Him by God. Since this is the case, the kind of power He has differs from all others. His power is not "sensibly present" and

'impossible it is, that they the Presbyterians should so close up their eyes, as not to discern what odds there is between that kind of operation which we imply in the headship of princes, and that which agreeth to our Saviour over the Church.'²

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, iv, 5.

2. Ecc. Pol., VIII, iv, 5.

For, indeed, kings rule only in sensible external things, and in no sense can they usurp the Powers that Christ Himself possesses. However, in history "visible government is a thing necessary for the Church", and the power that visible government exercises is power of dominion. This power may be "spiritual in regard of the matter about which it dealeth",¹ but must and can be distinguished from the actual spiritual power that Christ possesses. Thus in "external" government it is possible for a church to choose the arrangements it requires and to bestow authority on whom it pleases. The authority of the head of such a church is not to be confused with that exercised by Christ. To do otherwise is to proclaim oneself guilty of pernicious confusion.

Hooker discusses a number of points in regard to the authority of the Head of the Church in England, such as the power to nominate bishops,² the control of ecclesiastical courts,³ and the authority to call church assemblies.⁴ The discussion of these and other points is dependent upon a distinction between "power of dominion" and "power of order". In some ways this distinction parallels that

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, iv, 11.
2. Ecc. Pol., VIII, vii, 1-7.
3. Ecc. Pol., VIII, viii, 1-9.
4. Ecc. Pol., VIII, v, 1-2.

between necessity and indifference. For in Hooker's judgment the power of order was instituted directly by God in the Scriptures. It is an aspect of the promise of salvation, and Jesus Christ, the Son of God, instituted the sacraments and the power to administer them.¹ Hooker, however, finds it necessary here to distinguish between instituting a power and bestowing it on successive persons, and again, between bestowing a power and stipulating the conditions under which that power may be exercised.² In short, the matter is not merely one of origins, and Hooker rejects outright the claim of the Catholic Church that the right to select persons to exercise the power of order resides directly in the successors of St Peter.³ Thus, yet another claim of direct godly institution is rejected by Hooker. For on his terms whomever a church selects to exercise the power of order is itself a matter of indifference. The actual choice of a person, of course, must be distinguished from the exercise of his

1. "Even so Christ having given unto his Church the power whereof we speak, what she doth by her appointed agents, that duty though they discharge, yet is it not theirs peculiarly, but hers; her power it is which they do exercise." Ecc. Pol., VIII, vi, 3.
2. Ecc. Pol., VIII, vi, 3.
3. Ecc. Pol., VIII, vi, 3.

power, the power of consecration.¹ For the grace of the power of order is God's alone to bestow, and the sacraments themselves are means of true grace only when they are administered by persons specifically ordained to God's service. Though the Head of the Church in England, as stipulated in the Act of Supremacy, may confer upon bishops the temporal requisites of their office (that is, he controls their election); it is their ecclesiastical consecration which "gives being" to bishops.² In respect of their sacramental function bishops possess powers which kings do not have.³

Hooker, however, equivocates on the power of excommunication which priests possess, and it was on this point that a direct clash between the spiritual and the temporal powers might conceivably have occurred. The Presbyterians themselves wished to see the Crown directly subject to censure, but Hooker appears to argue against such a position for political reasons.⁴ That is, the commonwealth itself would be in grave danger if the person occupying the highest authoritative position in the social hierarchy were excommunicated, and removed from the ambience of his subjects.

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, vii, 2.

2. Ecc. Pol., VIII, vii, 2.

3. Ecc. Pol., VIII, vii, 1.

4. Ecc. Pol., VIII, ix, 3.

'Where sith the kings of England are within their own dominions the most high, and can have no peer, how is it possible that any, either civil or ecclesiastical, person under them should have over them coercive power, when such power would make that person so far forth his superior's superior, ruler and judge? It cannot therefore stand with the nature of such sovereign regiment that any subject should have power to exercise on kings so highly authorized the greatest censure of excommunication according to the platform of Reformed Discipline For which cause, till better reason be brought, to prove that kings cannot lawfully be exempted from subjection unto ecclesiastical courts, we must and do affirm their said exemption unlawful.'¹

The most important aspect of the Head of the Church's authority is the power to make laws in regard to ecclesiastical organization. Since the church is a society, it has the power to institute what it deems necessary.² This authority to enact law need not be in the clergy alone. There is no necessary reason why it should, nor is there any traditional warrant for it to do so. Hooker emphasizes the right of the laity to participate in the government of the church, and the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Parliament embodied and safeguarded this right. For

'The Parliament of England together with the convocation annexed thereunto, is that whereupon the very essence of all government within kingdom doth depend; it is even the body of the whole realm; it consisteth of the king, and of all that within the land are subject unto him; for they are all there present, either in person, or by such as they voluntarily have derived their very personal rights unto. The Parliament is a court not merely temporal as if it meddle with nothing but only leather and wool.'³

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, ix, 6.
2. Ecc. Pol., VIII, vi, 6.
3. Ecc. Pol., VIII, vi, 11.

We have seen, then, how, by wide use of the distinction between necessity and indifference, by constant repetition of the need for order, by constant emphasis on the individual in his institutional setting, and by consequent stress on the importance of traditional modes of conduct, Hooker has arrived at his final conclusion:

'Let it stand for our final conclusion, that in a free Christian state or kingdom, where one and the self-same people are the Church and the commonwealth, God through Christ directly the people to see it for good and weighty considerations expedient that their sovereign Lord and governor in causes civil have also in ecclesiastical affairs a supreme power; forasmuch as the light of reason doth lead them unto it, and against it God's own revealed law hath nothing; surely they do not in submitting themselves thereunto any other than that which a wise and religious people ought to do.'¹

It is such a conclusion and such remarks as these that have evoked two diametrically opposed responses in Hooker's interpreters. On the one hand, we have the judgment offered by A. S. McGrade, who remarks that "if Hooker is committing an error, it is the error of spiritualizing the state rather than of temporalizing religion".² On the other hand, H. F. Kearney (who, as we have seen, finds it necessary to employ the adjective "positivist")³ and Peter Munz considers that Hooker's conclusions are in some significant

1. Ecc. Pol., VIII, iii, 6.

2. A. S. McGrade, The Coherence of Hooker's Polity: the Books on Power, Journal of the History of Ideas, vol. XXIV, 1963, p. 175.

3. H. F. Kearney, Richard Hooker: A Reconsideration, Cambridge Journal, vol. 5, 1952, p. 310.

sense secular.¹ They both have occasion to refer to Marsilius of Padua in order to substantiate their opinions. However, such an understanding of both Hooker's intentions and his conclusions is as much dependent on a misreading of the Defensor Pacis as on a reading of the Ecclesiastical Polity.² It is clear that in such disputes both parties have seized on one aspect of Hooker's remarks which appear to offer the key as to what he was about. The answer in practically all such disputes lies to the side of such representations.

We will conclude, therefore, with a few comments on the relationship of context to content in the Ecclesiastical Polity. For Hooker religious worship must be a matter of individual choice for on such a choice salvation itself is dependent. This, however, must be balanced by the fact that all paths now quite clearly lead to the doctrines of the Christian religion. The use of correspondence and the postulation of an objective moral reality in that sense removes choice. For, indeed, an idea of a reality independent of man's enquiring mind must at some stage remove

1. P. Munz, The Place of Hooker in the History of Thought, London, 1952, chapter three.
2. For a correction to the "positivist" interpretation of Marsilius of Padua see E. Lewis, "The Positivism of Marsiglio of Padua", Speculum, vol. 38, 1963.

further enquiry. The doctrines offered in Scriptures have, in a moral and religious sense, completed this enquiry.

The church in England has recognized the truths of these Christian doctrines. The citizens of England have chosen their religion, and, on Hooker's terms, it would be irrational to change or reject it at any time in the future. In contrast, however, the detailed arrangements that the church deems necessary for its existence and protection are a matter of custom and convenience. They come within the purview of the political and ecclesiastical authorities. Consequently there is no private choice as to ecclesiastical detail for that detail is now a matter for public deliberation. In effect, by attaching itself so closely to the political structure the church has become an involuntary and coercive community. It has, to some degree, taken on the outward aspect of a commonwealth. It is as much a "public thing" as the commonwealth itself. This move may give to the Ecclesiastical Polity a political character; it hardly makes it a "secular" tract. For the status of the political and of the external arrangements of the church is dependent upon the natural and the super-natural context. The supporting circular structure of this context protects the content from such a "secular" interpretation.

CONCLUSION

We have seen how the present essay has described and developed a number of points, notably the distinction between theory and practice, the character of the various levels of discourse in the Ecclesiastical Polity, and the relationship between these levels of discourse. The elaboration of such points arises quite appropriately out of an investigation of what Richard Hooker was about. The distinction between theory and practice, for instance, is in effect presented by Hooker in his own distinction between necessity and indifference. The differentiation between the various levels that discourse can and does take may be seen in the division between the description of the natural system in Book One of the Ecclesiastical Polity and the discussion of the various details in the latter books. Throughout the whole Ecclesiastical Polity Hooker was endeavouring to elaborate a relationship, or at least was proclaiming a connection, between these levels of thought.

The relationship between these levels of thought is determined by Hooker's own particular notion of "nature" or necessity. Nature and its concomitant principles are universal in character, they give direction to the whole of reality. Yet in theory they could still prescribe

particular actions in specific situations. Thus political discourse, even when directed to specific occurrences, was held to retain an objective character. That is, argument of a political nature at a sufficient level of generality need, even on particular occasions, have little concern with the character of the audience addressed. It took its character and force from what it was "right" to do; and this was, or would be, deduced from general principles of an unchanging and objective Nature. Not only were the principles or ends there for all to "see", there were also logical operations such that what it was right and correct to do in a specific situation could be "deduced". In short, with the objective character of the principles involved and the precise way of deducing the required information from these principles, political argument took on the identity of proof (the counter-point to "deduction"), that is, argument not distracted by the purpose of having to persuade anyone, but designed to prove the "correctness" of what was being proposed or justified.

The principles that Hooker considered to have been enunciated by the law of nature have, as we have seen, this objective character. The arguments employed to support the apparently objective character of these principles are, however, merely circumlocutions, and the operation of "deducing" what to do in a specific situation such as that which England was facing with the radical character of the

Presbyterian movement, is nowhere properly indicated nor coherently explained. That is, the claims that Hooker makes for the nature and force of his argument are, on the evidence of what he produced in the Ecclesiastical Polity, not substantiated. His argument does not proceed in the manner proclaimed nor display the characteristic features of "deductive" reasoning. In short, it is systematically misleading, and the actual relationship between necessity and indifference is more complex than he allows.

Even on his own terms, then, Hooker failed to display the relationship proposed between the areas of necessity and indifference. This reveals the incoherence in his own set of presuppositions. Yet the actual incoherence of his argument in regard to necessity and indifference has not disposed of the direction and movement of his argument. In reality, Hooker's inability to do what he propounds merely complicates any examination of his position. In the present investigation of his argument a suggestion has been put forward as to how his argument actually proceeds; what he was doing was different from what he said he was doing. What Hooker's failure to relate necessity and indifference in a properly coherent fashion left him with was two distinct levels or aspects of practical argument. The relationship between these levels of practical argument does not amount to a "formal" distinction between necessity and indifference.

In the present essay, then, Hooker's general position is held to take the form of an extended metaphor. Correspondences in one aspect actually may be said to attempt to replace the "proof" that he frequently enunciates but fails to produce. This device of employing images is meant to distract attention away from the dissimilarities of the identities compared and to concentrate it upon those aspects of the comparison which appear to lend cohesion and certainty to the argument in question. Such correspondences, however, do not and, indeed, cannot replace the demonstrative proof. They, in fact, display the practical nature of Hooker's argument, and what the so-called objective principles revealed by Nature really leave him with is a new rhetorical device. In this way the circularity of Hooker's argument enables him to consider as objective any principles his religion and his disposition demand or desire. This objectivity or necessity is not the result of demonstration, but is the stamp of approval that a thinker or a tradition cares to bestow on a principle or a precept. It is, clearly, not the method of reaching such objective principles that is of particular importance, but the content that the principles proclaim. In the Ecclesiastical Polity this content is Christian in character, but Christian in such a way that it excludes a Presbyterian interpretation. Hooker's political disposition, the disposition to be conservative, is to be seen in his attitude to political change, which, in turn, is revealed in his examination of English political order.

II

The character and relationship of necessity and indifference provides, then, the specific methodological context for Hooker's arguments. The general objective principles of nature and historical particulars find their place within this context. This distinction between necessity and indifference marks also the divisive point between means and ends, the particular and the general, and external and internal. On the one side, we have seen that the final end of man is to reside with God in eternity. This end and the various principles of conduct that are considered to follow from this are seen with "the eye of the understanding," that is, internally. On the other side, that is, externally, there are various means or practices in regard to conduct in general. It is this which accounts for the variety of human activity displayed in history. These particular practices, however, are not merely a matter of random and irrational choice, for they are all ultimately related or relatable to the general context of Nature.

Nature, then, provides the context to the discussion of politics in general and to the particular arrangements of the English polity. Just as Hooker's general argument finds its place in the context of the distinctions between necessity and indifference, ends and means, internal and

external, so various notions of the origin of political association and different ideas of political space and time affect the character and language of this argument.

"Classical" political thought supplies the general contextual explanation of the origin of political society and of political space, but not of political time. Yet, while Hooker's vocabulary is, for the most part, characteristic of the Christian/Classical tradition, his discussion of historical particulars often alters the nuances of such language in significant ways. In this manner he reveals independent but (to him) relatable ideas of political space and time. Again in this discussion we see a constant movement between different levels of discourse, and between different notions of political space, political time and change.

One of the particular concerns of "classical" political thought was the question of the origin of political society and of the nature and forms of various political constitutions. Such thinking was greatly influenced by various Latin Authors and after the thirteenth century by Aristotle. Yet there are significant differences of philosophical and theological background between Aristotle and the Scholastics to say the least. In scholastic thought it was recognized that men, despite their ostensibly different pursuits, are all ultimately determined to seek God as the common end and as the final cause of all things. Aristotle, who did not explore any theological background in his political

thought, found it necessary to employ a classification of different kinds of polity which is itself (in part) the specification of the different goods that may seek in common. On the one hand, the theological background in Aquinas and Hooker in theory places direct limitations on the forms of political action. On the other hand, for Aristotle legal arrangements are a function of the prevailing distribution of political power; to resist this power is to undertake to change this distribution and hence those legal arrangements; and this in itself is to change by violent means the form of that polity.

Now certainly the understanding of the universe and the nature of man may provide a context for political activity. Christianity, in the sense that the Fall is seen as the necessary cause of all specifically mundane activity, must consider the origin of political activity in evil. Yet under the influence of Aristotle the character ascribed to politics by Hooker, for instance, is softened and changed. In this way both the emphasis on the natural character of society and also on the Aristotelian notion of political order and constitutionalism enter into the political thinking of the Christian Hooker. In Book One of the Ecclesiastical Polity as well as in Book Eight Hooker subscribes to the notion of a constitution as having a definite foundation and a form ("soul") fixed in space. Time and change as such do not enter into consideration; and in Aristotle at least,

time was generally regarded as an area of corruption. Change was the evil/^{to}be ward off, and reform, if it was possible, meant a return to first principles.¹

Hooker, then, when he has subscribed to the principles of classical political thought, goes on, within the context of his distinction between necessity and indifference, to discuss the character of historical change. The precise character of the world at any specific time, or of a particular political order, cannot be completely captured within the confines of general and abstract thought. Here Hooker's reliance on the nature of the English constitution and on a conservative disposition leads him to a view (not explicitly expressed as his general theory was) of political change in which the passing of time need not necessarily be destructive of political order. What we have in Book Eight of the Ecclesiastical Polity is a notion of political activity as a traditional engagement. It is in regard to particulars that Hooker's traditional sense is revealed. Conservatism is a disposition appropriate to the consideration of change in time.

1. In the few pages that he allows himself, Gunnell is particularly interesting on the political thought of Aristotle, especially in regard to time and change. See J. G. Gunnell, Political Philosophy and Time, Middletown, Connecticut, 1969, pp. 225-240.

Man and God's works are, to employ Hooker's terminology, in a state of possibility, that is, they are permeated by a desire to become "perfecter than they now are".

'And because there is not in the world anything whereby another may some way be made the perfecter, therefor all things that are are good.'¹

When, consequently, political order is viewed through "the glass of possibility"², a man disposed to be conservative is in a position both to defend an association whose imperfections are part of a larger whole and to admit that human skill, within the limits set by the Fall, may devise means whereby the possible may be made actual. Thus the change from possible to actual is subsumed under a conservative image of political change. There is, however, no notion of a return to first principles, and this is a step beyond the argument as used by certain Conciliarists, for example, who held that every society may be able to rid itself of corrupting defects; in this the defect is innovation, the reform a return to first principles.

The occasion for Hooker's elaboration of his position was, of course, provided by the fundamentalist challenge of the extreme Protestants. In effect, they argued that the main principles informing ecclesiastical arrangements had been provided by the Scriptures, and any movement away from these principles was in reality a degeneration. A

1. Ecc. Pol., I, v, 1.

2. Sheldon Wolin's phrase .

return to those principles was the only possible manner of reform. This particular notion of a return to first principles was not influenced (as far as we can tell) by any Aristotelian or classical notion of political order, but it was similar in that it placed especial emphasis on ordered space (i.e. on strictly ordered modes of conduct appropriate to its "form") which was or should be unchanging in time. It was such a fundamentalist argument that Hooker endeavoured to dispose of at a number of levels. At the lowest level, that of "external" particulars, we have attempted to display how his opponents' argument and his own particular disposition altered the nuances of his inherited thought. In this way traditionalism and the proper disposition in regard to institutional order came to the fore.

The nuances of traditionalism are, then, revealed in the changing facets of Hooker's argument. It may be seen both in his statements of intent and in his discussion of English society in the later books. Clearly the notion of tradition is at the best of times difficult to grasp and understand. In a writer of Hooker's calibre it becomes even more difficult if only for the simple reason that he does not attempt to discuss tradition or even traditionalism explicitly. However, this much is clear. It is that Hooker's traditionalism emerges out of his modifications of the notions of the origin and foundation of political society and of space-bound constitutionalism. It is

in the margins of such ideas as these that the notion of slowly ordered change is seen neither as a corruption of, nor as a necessary return to, first principles. It is true that any institutional arrangements have principles which are the result of reflection on conduct but these are not "first" principles in the classical manner. Nor are they employed in the theological sense by Hooker. For at this point traditionalism in Hooker's argument undercuts external (i.e. non-historical) accountability, both at the level of natural law and at the level of a constitutionalism which views reform as a necessary return to those principles that "in-form" a political order.

III

A conservative disposition is, for Hooker, appropriate when change in historical order is under consideration. The occasion for Hooker's articulation of this disposition in the Ecclesiastical Polity was provided by the challenge of radical ideas stemming from the extreme Protestants. Our examination has led us to agree with both Lord High Cecil who considered that

'Before the Reformation it is impossible to distinguish conservatism in politics [i.e. in practice] , not because there was none, but because there was nothing else,'¹

and with Michael Walzer who has shown that the sixteenth century saw the birth of radical politics. This radicalism, as we have seen, took the form of an effort at restoration and not of an imposition of "progress". This distinction, as we have noted, is important theoretically since the emphasis in radical Protestant thought was placed on a notion of a "return" and not on a notion of inevitable progress. Nonetheless in practice the results of such thinking are often similar, they have both a destructive potentiality in regard to present order. For the times important to them, distant future and distant past, have in practice, in the present, little or no concrete content. Nothing within the categories of past or future can be

1. Lord Hugh Cecil, Conservatism, London, 1911, p. 25.

directly experienced. In fact, it is from their wilful nescience as to actuality, and not from any bright "ideas" that they might dream up that their revolutionary destructiveness comes.

In the face of this revolutionary potential that the radicals' arguments and actions displayed, Hooker endeavoured to apply certain distinctions as a context in which to examine and destroy this position. In the movement of the book we see emerge what we have described as a notion of tradition and a conservative disposition. Unlike his radical opponents Hooker has come to terms with the gradual change of society. Action, therefore, need not, indeed must not, be the inevitable destruction of what is valuable in the world. In this way conduct and order are slowly changing to preserve themselves, that is, what is valuable. Unlike the "progressive", who is the "modern" counter-part of the radical in so-called traditional societies, this inevitable change cannot be guided to some end where conduct may become merely the repetition of what is considered perfect and cannot be changed for the better. With the notion of the accumulation of particulars change may be considered as an unfolding, the realization of potential. There is, then, always a better, but never a perfect political order.

Alongside this emphasis on tradition and slowly unfolding possibility, where political time and space need not be in direct conflict, we have the conservative's regard for the importance of the rule of law. The rule of law is the expression of order and harmony within a

political association. Laws, therefore, must only be changed when convenience requires it. The rule of law and the notion of tradition are, indeed, complementary. Such notions as the importance of law and the necessity of slowly ordered change must be reflected in the thought and action of those engaged in political activity. Ignorance of the notion of slowly unfolding change must, consequently, disqualify anyone from participating in political action at all, for these are the appropriate criteria by which to judge any political situation.

One criteria from the conservative's holy trinity remains, and that is the notion of hierarchy. This idea of a hierarchy appears to be purely political in character, although the peculiarities of the extended metaphor in the Ecclesiastical Polity allow the transfer of this attribute to nature as a whole and then back again to society as an aspect of the larger hierarchy of nature. Nonetheless, because this notion is political in character, it is particularly suited to the institutional vision with its emphasis on historical arrangements and external particulars. In this historical (external) sense society may be viewed as a hierarchy of skills of which the most important in regard to action and general order is the political. This skill occupies the pinnacle for on the rule of the prince the order of society depends. On political order the success of lesser desires turns. Such is the nature of society that caution, not private ambition, must be the keynote of princely rule.

With these criteria (and remembering his distinction between necessity and indifference) Hooker is able to condemn the radical Protestants for applying the most inappropriate notions not only to political society, but, more important, to the institutional arrangements of the Church in England. For the church in this external sense cannot be the City of God on earth at all. Certainly man is primarily a religious creature, and the church is the instrument of God's grace. It is not, however, the organization of the historical church itself that may reveal in some way God's workings on the soul. In the Ecclesiastical Polity the outward manifestations of the Church are subject to the standards governing all external things. Of course, both political and ecclesiastical order are in their way necessary means to higher spiritual goods. Yet, within the context of the distinction between necessity and indifference, they do have a certain self-sufficiency in that standards appropriate to them as external particulars may be employed.

What we have in the Ecclesiastical Polity is, then, a combination of Christian belief and conservative disposition. What is important for Hooker is the precise identity of that external particular, the English Commonwealth, of which the church, insofar as the power of dominion was involved, was a part. In general, Hooker's thought is a peculiar combination of faith and scepticism. His faith itself is centered on the Christian religion and on what Reason may achieve in unravelling the workings of God's universe. His

scepticism may be seen in his consideration of change and of human action. The Presbyterians, in contrast, show themselves to be pessimistic in regard to the value of present arrangements. They are, however, supremely optimistic in their faith and in the possibilities and potentiality that action possesses in being able to bring about a "perfect" state of affairs. Hooker himself is similarly optimistic in the sense that God has promised salvation to mankind; but he is pessimistic as to the effects that action may bring about for, in the conditions of imperfection in which man exists historically, there can be no permanent resting place until the end of time. It is not by his own actions but by the Grace of God that man may be dragged ashore from the sea of inevitable change.

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