

RICHARD HOOKER: AN INTRODUCTION TO HIS LIFE AND THOUGHT

Torrance KIRBY,
McGill University, Montreal, Canada

Abstract

Richard Hooker (1554-1600)

Richard Hooker was born in Devon, near Exeter in April 1554; he died at Bishopsbourne, Kent on 2 November 1600. From 1579 to 1585 he was a Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and read the Hebrew Lecture at the University during this period. In 1585 Queen Elizabeth I appointed him Master of the Temple Church at the Inns of Court where he engaged in a preaching struggle with his assistant, Walter Travers. Their disagreement over the theological and political assumptions of the reformed Church of England as defined by the Act of Uniformity of 1559 and the *Book of Common Prayer* led to Hooker's composition of his great work *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie* (1593). The treatise consists of a lengthy preface which frames the polemical context, followed by eight books. The first four books address what he terms "general meditations": (1) the nature of law in general, (2) the proper uses of the authorities of reason and revelation, (3) the application of the latter to the government of the church and (4) objections to practices inconsistent with the continental "reformed" example. The final four address the more "particular decisions" of the Church's constitution: (5) public religious duties as prescribed by the *Book of Common Prayer* (1559), (6) the power of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, (7) the authority of bishops and (8) the supreme authority of the Prince in both church and commonwealth, and hence their unity in the Christian state. Hooker grounds his apology in defence of the Elizabethan Settlement in his claim that God is law—"The being of God is a kind of law to his working." (*Lawes* I.2.2) As 'first originall cause', this divine 'aeternal Law' contains within itself all derivative species of law; 'as ofspringe of god, they are in him as effects in their highest cause, he likewise actualle is in them, thassistance and influence of his deitie is their life.' (V.56.5) Hooker distinguishes, moreover, between a 'first' and a 'second' eternal law. The latter comprises all derivative species of law which participate the eternal law as discrete emanations ordered dispositively in hierarchical 'procession', while the former is the original, self-constituting divine source as it remains concomitantly and ineffably simple, at unity within itself—i.e. 'verie Onenesse'. Hooker's account of eternal law as simultaneously unity in simplicity and participation of that unity by a multiplicity of derivative forms of law recapitulates the account of causality set out by Proclus in his *Elements of Theology* whereby 'every effect remains in its cause, proceeds from it, and reverts upon it.' (prop. 35) Hooker anchors his elaborate defence of the Elizabethan religious settlement in a metaphysical theory of law which itself assumes a Neoplatonic ontology of 'participation' in the Proclean tradition.

Key words:

Richard Hooker, Elizabethan Settlement, Reform, Church of England, Political Theology

Özet

Richard Hooker (1554-1600): Hayatı ve Eserleri

Richard Hooker Exeter yakınlarındaki Devon'da Nisan 1554'te doğdu; Kent yakınlarındaki Bishopsbourne'da 2 Kasım 1600'de öldü. 1579'dan 1585'e kadar Oxford'da Corpus Christi College'da Fellow olarak bulundu ve bu sırada üniversitedeki İbranice derslerini verdi. Kraliçe 1. Elizabeth kendisini 1585'te Inss of Court'ta bulunan Temple Church'ün başı olarak atadı; Hooker burada yardımcısı Walter Travers ile birlikte vaaz mücadelesi verdi. İngiltere Reform Kilisesi'nin 1559 tarihli Act of Uniformity ve *Book of Common Prayer*'de tanımlanan teolojik ve politik kabulleri konusunda Travers ile ihtilafa düştüler. Bu nedenle Richard Hooker başyapıtı *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie* adlı eseri yazdı (1593). Bu eser, yazılmasına neden olan polemik bağlamını detaylıca açıklayan bir giriş ve ardından sekiz ciltten oluşur. Eserin ilk dört kitabı Hooker'ın "genel düşünceler" diye adlandırdığı bir muhtevadan oluşur: (1) genel olarak hukukun tabiatı, (2) akıl ve vahiy otoritelerinin yerinde kullanılması, (3) vahyin kilise idaresine tatbik edilmesi ve (4) kıta Avrupası "Reform" Hristiyanlarının uygulamalarına uyumlu olmayan uygulamalara itirazlar. Son dört kitap ise Kilise'nin anayasasına ait daha özel kararlarla ilgilidir: (5) *Book of Common Prayer* (1559)'da vazedilen kamusal dini vazifeler, (6) Kilise yargısının gücü, (7) piskoposların otoritesi ve (8) kralın hem kilisede hem de devletteki mutlak otoritesi ve bu iki kurumun Hristiyan devlette bir oluşları. Hooker, Elizabeth'in reformunu savunurken iddialarını Tanrı kanunudur şeklinde ifade edilen argümanına dayandırır. "Tanrı'nın varlığı kendi işleri hakkında bir kanun hükmündedir (*Lawes* I.2.2). Bu ilahi "ezeli Kanun" kendi içinde tüm diğer yasa türlerini barındırır. Dahası Hooker "birincil" ve "ikincil" ezeli yasalar arasında bir ayırım yapar. Hooker Elizabeth'in gerçekleştirdiği dini reform adına yaptığı savunusunu bu şekilde bir metafizik kanun teorisine dayandırır. Bu teori ise Yeni Eflâtuncu bir ontolojiye dayanır.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Richard Hooker, Elizabeth Reformu, Reform, Anglikan Kilisesi, Politik teoloji.

Richard Hooker was born at Heavitree near Exeter in April 1554; he died at Bishopsbourne, Kent on 2 November 1600.¹ He was educated at Exeter Grammar School and Corpus Christi College, Oxford where he matriculated in 1569. His tutor was John Rainoldes, later President of Corpus Christi and one of the Translators of the Authorised Version of the Bible. Hooker gained a BA and was admitted a "disciple" of Corpus Christi in 1573. In 1577 he proceeded MA and was elected a probationary fellow. In 1579 he was made a full fellow and appointed deputy lecturer to Thomas Kingsmill, Regius Professor of Hebrew. He delivered the Hebrew lecture for the remainder of his time at Oxford. Hooker was made a deacon by John Aylmer, Bishop of London, in August 1579 and was ordained presbyter a year later. He became junior dean of Corpus Christi in 1583. In the autumn of 1584 he earned marked public

1 For a recent and thorough account of Richard Hooker's career, see Lee W. Gibbs, "Life of Hooker," in Torrance Kirby, ed. *A Companion to Richard Hooker*, ed. Torrance Kirby (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 1-26.

distinction by delivering a sermon at Paul's Cross, London.² Hooker resigned his fellowship in 1584 and was presented to the living of Drayton Beauchamp in Buckinghamshire by the patron, John Cheney. On 17 March 1585, by Letters Patent from the Crown, Hooker was appointed Master of the Temple Church of the Inns of Court where he shared the pulpit with the disciplinarian Puritan divine Walter Travers. Before a congregation of the English judges and barristers they engaged in a theological controversy which was to occupy Hooker for the rest of his life. He married Joan Churchman on 13 February 1588. In June 1591 he was appointed subdean of Salisbury Cathedral, prebendary of Netheravon and was presented by Queen Elizabeth to the living of Boscombe. As a member of the Cathedral Chapter he was present at the election of John Coldwell as Bishop of Sarum and is recorded as having presided over the subdean's court at Salisbury in 1591.

The first edition of his great treatise *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie* was entered in the Stationer's Register to the printer and publisher John Windet on 29 January 1593 under the authorization of Archbishop John Whitgift. Initially only the Preface and the first four of eight books were published. A presentation copy was sent to William Cecil on 13 March 1593, the same day on which Sir Edwin Sandys, Hooker's former pupil at Corpus Christi, spoke in the House of Commons in support of legislation "to retain the Queen's subjects in their due obedience."³ The Act in question was directed against "the wicked and dangerous practices of seditious sectaries," a lengthy account of whom figures prominently in the Preface to the *Lawes*.⁴ There is evidence that Hooker consulted extensively in the formulation of the polemical thrust of his treatise with his former pupils Sandys, son of the Archbishop of York, and George Cranmer, grand-nephew of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury. The fifth book of the *Lawes* was published in December 1597. In January of 1595 he was presented by the Queen to the living of Bishopsbourne in Kent where he died on 2 November 1600 and was buried in the chancel of the parish church. He left an estate valued at £1092 which consisted mainly of books. A second edition of the first four books edited by Hooker's friend and literary executor, John Spenser, fellow of Corpus Christi, was issued in 1604. In his preface to the second edition Spenser refers to the existence of the unpublished "three last books, their fathers Posthumi," and claims that Hooker lived to see the MS perfected. Spenser also edited Hooker's various tractates and sermons which were printed by

2 David Neelands, "Richard Hooker's Paul's Cross Sermon," in Torrance Kirby, ed. *Paul's Cross and the Culture of Persuasion in England, 1520-1640* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 245-262.

3 35 Eliz. I, cap. 1; *Statutes of the Realm*, iv. pt. 2, 841.

4 *Lawes*, Pref. 8; *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1977), vol. 1: 36.18-51.22. All references to the *Lawes* edition cite book, chapter, and section. References to the Folger edition cite volume, page, and line numbers.

Joseph Barnes, the university printer, in 1612 and 1614. A complete edition of all eight books of the *Lawes* was not published until after the Restoration.

Much of Hooker's career was spent in theological controversy. As Master of the Temple at the Inns of Court he preached a series of sermons on themes of Reformation soteriology and ecclesiology. Their doctrinal orthodoxy was formally challenged by Walter Travers in *A Supplication made to the Privie Counsell*.⁵ In particular, Hooker was reproached by Travers for maintaining that the Church of Rome can be viewed as a branch of "the true church of Christ" and that "he douted not but that thowsands of the fathers which lyved and died in the superstitions of that church, were saved because of their ignorance which excused them."⁶ In addition, Hooker's strong appeal to the authority of reason in religious matters was challenged by Travers as inconsistent with reformed orthodoxy. Hooker's reply to these objections lays the groundwork of the philosophical and theological system expounded later in the *Lawes*.⁷

Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie consists of a lengthy preface and eight books. The first four books address in turn (1) the nature of law in general; (2) the proper uses of the authorities of reason and revelation; (3) the application of the latter to the government of the church; and (4) objections to practices inconsistent with continental "reformed" models. The final four books address more particular issues of (5) public religious duties—in effect the liturgy of the *Book of Common Prayer* (1559); (6) the power of jurisdiction; (7) the authority of bishops; and (8) the supreme authority of the Prince in both church and commonwealth, and hence their unity in the Christian state. The treatise is framed rhetorically as a response to Thomas Cartwright who had been John Whitgift's formidable adversary in the Admonition Controversy of the 1570s.⁸

The preface is in fact addressed formally "to them that seeke (as they tearme it) the reformation of lawes, and orders ecclesiasticall, in the Church of England," that is to disciplinarian-puritans who, like Cartwright and Travers, sought closer conformity to the pattern of the "best reformed churches" on the continent, especially Calvin's Geneva. The preface sets the tone of the work and announces Hooker's main apologetic intent. There is a significant difference between Hooker's rhetorical approach and that of previous contributions to Elizabethan polemics. He abandons the usual recourse to ridicule and personal abuse which was so characteristic of the vast majority of tracts contributed by both sides of the controversy and speaks irenically to

5 *FLE* 5: 171 – 210. See Egil Grisli's Textual Introduction, 'Tractates and Sermons', *FLE*, vol. 5.

6 *FLE* 5: 200.12

7 Books I-IV were published in 1593, book V in 1597, and books VI-VIII posthumously.

8 Peter Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?: Presbyterianism and English Conformist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988). Donald J. McGinn, *The Admonition Controversy* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1949).

the fundamental theological assumptions with the professed aim of securing conscientious acceptance of the Settlement. To this end he sets out to persuade by an appeal to mutually acceptable theological assumptions and authorities. Hooker's starting-point is to affirm the disciplinarian premise that the doctrinal tenets and the pastoral aspirations of the Reformation had to be fulfilled in the polity of the Church of England. His rhetorical approaches intended to serve the main apologetic aim of the treatise, namely to justify the Elizabethan Settlement as consistent with the principles of reformed doctrinal orthodoxy. Thus the grand cosmic scheme of laws set out in Book I is intended to place the particulars of the controversy (viz. the precise forms of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, government, ceremonies and the relation of the church to the civil order) within a foundational context: "because the point about which wee strive is the qualitie of our *Lawes*, our first entrance hereinto cannot better be made, then with consideration of the nature of lawe in generall."⁹ His aim is to persuade by tracing the "particular decisions" of the Settlement back to "general meditations" on first principles.

Hooker defines law in general as "that which doth assigne unto each thing the kinde, that which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the forme and measure of working... so that no certaine end could ever be attained, unlesse the actions whereby it is attained were regular, that is to say, made suteable for and correspondent unto their end, by some canon, rule or lawe."¹⁰ This definition places him in a scholastic tradition dependent ultimately upon Aristotle. Hooker's adaptation of this definition, however, goes beyond any simply Aristotelian or Thomistic account. Working from the definition, Hooker asserts that everything works according to law, including God himself: "the being of God is a kinde of lawe to his working: for that perfection which God is, geveith perfection to that he doth."¹¹ There are certain structural similarities between Book I of the *Lawes* and Thomas Aquinas's short treatise on law in the second part of the *Summa Theologiae* (qq. 90-96). The principal resemblance is Hooker's adoption of Aquinas's neo-platonic metaphysical logic. Just as the neo-platonic cosmology accounts for the genesis of the world by means of a downward emanation or procession from the principle of original unity, so also Hooker derives a diverse hierarchy of laws from the eternal law as their "highest wellspring and fountaine." His emphasis upon the divine unity is marked: "our God is one, or rather verie Onenesse, and meereunitie, having nothing but it selfe in it selfe, and not consisting (as all things do besides God) of many things besides."¹² All species of law participate in the undifferentiated unity of the eternal law and are derived from it by way of "procession." Hooker adheres to the Christian

9 *Lawes* I.1.2

10 *Lawes* I.2.1

11 *Lawes* I.2.2

12 *Lawes* I.2.2

neo-platonic *lex divinitatis* whereby the originative principle of law remains simple in itself while proceeding out of itself in its generation of manifold derivative forms of law. He distinguishes between a first and a second eternal law on the ground that God is a law both to himself (*in se*) in his divine simplicity and to all creatures besides (*ad extra*). His discussion of the first eternal law is thus closely analogous to a traditional “*logos*” theology.

The second eternal law comprises the divine order as “kept by all his creatures, according to the severall conditions wherewith he hath indued them.”¹³ It has a variety of “names” depending on the different orders of creatures subject to the one divine government. The two principal derivative genera of the second eternal law are the natural law and the revealed law of the scriptures, sometimes called the divine law. The entire system of the laws is thus expressed in the classically neoplatonic twofold motion of procession from (*exitus*) and return to (*reditus*) the original unity of the eternal law. The natural law, by a further procession, comprises in turn subordinate species of law which govern irrational natural agents as well as rational; the law governing the rational creatures is distinguished further into the “law coelestial,” which orders the angels, and the “law of reason,” sometimes called the “natural law” which orders humankind. All of these sub-species represent the outward and downward *processio* of the second eternal law. On the other side, the law of God’s special revelation, the revealed law of the scriptures presupposes the disorder introduced into the cosmos by the Fall, and is provided in order to secure the final restoration or “return” of the creation to its original condition of unity under the eternal law. The distinction between the two *summa genera* of natural law and divine law which corresponds to the logical structure of procession and return is also reflected in the epistemological distinction of a twofold knowledge of God, namely by the light of supernatural revelation and by the natural light of reason. There are in addition composite species of law, such as human positive law and the law of nations, which are derived by a reflection upon the general principles contained in the natural law. These derivative species of law are a consequence of human sin and, like the divine law, are given as a corrective to the disorder introduced by the Fall (*remedium peccati*). In all of this the human creature as the *imago dei* is the focal point of the cosmic operation of procession from and return to the original order established in and by the divine cause.

The structure of this generic division of law shows that Hooker has clearly read Aquinas very closely indeed. The distinction between the first and second eternal laws is nonetheless a significant departure from the scholastic Thomistic model in an unmistakably Augustinian direction. In a manner characteristic of the theology of the magisterial reformers, the effect of this move is simultaneously to widen and decrease the distance between the

creator-lawgiver and the created cosmos. The gathering together of all the derivative species of law within the second eternal law reduces the sense of a mediated hierarchy between creator and creature and emphasizes rather the common participation of the manifold derivative species of law in their one source. At the same time the distinction between the first and second eternal laws upholds the clear distinction between creator and creature. This treatment of the eternal law exhibits the marked Augustinian character of Hooker's thought and distinguishes his Renaissance brand of Neoplatonism from the emphasis found in Aquinas.¹⁴

In the second book Hooker addresses the basic hermeneutical question of the definition and the extent of the authority of scripture. The "maine pillar" of the disciplinarian-puritan objections to the constitution established by the Elizabethan Settlement is the claim that "scripture ought to be the only rule of all our actions." The practical question is whether it is necessary to look to the scriptures directly for the structures of church government. Hooker argues that the authority of scripture must be interpreted strictly with respect to "that end whereto it tendeth." He affirms the reformers' doctrine that the Bible contains a complete account of all things "necessary to salvation." Tradition and human authority exercised through the church cannot add anything to God's written word. On the other hand, the grounds of religion are understood by Hooker both to be revealed in scripture and accessible to the light of natural reason. God the creator of the world speaks through nature whose voice is his instrument and is manifest to the eye of reason in the glorious works of creation. Whereas tradition is to be eschewed and scripture alone to be followed in the formulation of the rule of faith, tradition, custom and human authority, on the other hand, are necessary instruments to avoid "infinite perplexities, scrupulosities, doubts insoluble and extreme despair" in the external ordering of religion. It is not the purpose of the divine law as revealed in the scriptures to provide prescriptions for the political structure of the church.

In the third book Hooker argues that the visible church is a human "politiq̄uesocietie" subject to human laws and judgement, and is consequently dependent upon the authority of natural law, reason and custom. In this way matters of ecclesiastical polity are clearly distinguished from matters of faith and salvation. The question is complicated, however, by the ambiguous nature of the church. Just as the professing Christian is *simuljustus, simulpeccator*, as Luther puts it, and lives simultaneously in two realms, in an inward, spiritual realm of the conscience and in an outward, temporal realm of

14 From 'generall meditations' to 'particular decisions': the Augustinian coherence of Richard Hooker's political theology," In Robert Sturges, ed. *Sovereignty and Law in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*. Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and Renaissance (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 43-65. See also Torrance Kirby, *Richard Hooker, Reformer and Platonist* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005)

15 *Lawes* II.8.6

political community, so also the church is understood to be simultaneously the mystical body of Christ and a visible association of believers in the world. In this respect Hooker's doctrine of the Church is shaped dialectically by his reformed soteriology.¹⁶ The fourth book addresses the general principles which underpin the external ceremonies of the church. Hooker justifies the retention of the customs and traditions inherited from the ancient and medieval church which had been rejected by "certaine reformed Churches whose example therein we ought to have followed." Disciplinary puritans objected to the retention by the Church of England of ceremonial practices outwardly conformable with the uses of the Church of Rome. For Hooker it is essential to distinguish between the realms where tradition and scripture are authoritative in combination and where scripture is authoritative alone. The first principles established in the first book which govern the distinction of natural law, human law and divine law are here applied once again to justify the reformed Church of England's simultaneous adherence to the rule of faith as defined by the magisterial reformers and to a liberal interpretation of the continuity of ceremonial forms.

The fifth book of the *Lawes*, which is one third longer than the initial four books combined, offers an account of the particulars of "the severall publique duties of Christian religion" as established by the Act of Uniformity of 1559. Hooker addresses the "owtwardeforme" of religion in architecture, decoration, naming, formal hallowing and dedication of church buildings. He examines the public offices of preaching sermons and reading the scriptures, public prayer and the use of set forms of common prayer, the formality of dress and gesture in divine service, the proper use of music and the recitation of canticles. The theology of particularly controversial prayers is examined, e.g. the prayer "that all men might be saved". In his discussion of the sacraments in book five, chapters 50 through 56, Hooker changes the pace somewhat with an extended discourse on orthodox patristic Christology. The formulation of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 is taken as the dogmatic paradigm for understanding the manner of the Christian believer's participation in the godhead:

Sacramentes are the powerful instrumentes of God to eternall life. For as our naturall life consisteth in the union of the bodie with the soule; so our life supernaturall in the union of the soule with God. And for as much as there is no union of God with man without that meanebetwene both which is both, it seemeth requisite that wee first consider how God is in Christ, then how Christ is in us, and how the sacramentes doe serve to make us pertakers of Christ. In other thinges wee may be more briefe, but the waight of these requirethlargenes.¹⁷

16 For Hooker's reformed soteriology see his sermon *A Learned Discourse of Justification, Works, and How the Foundation of Faith is Overthrown*(1612), *FLE* 5:105-169.

17 *Lawes*V.51.3

Of particular note is Hooker's rejection of the Lutheran doctrine of the ubiquity or universal presence of Christ's human nature and affirmation of the so-called doctrine of the "*extra-Calvinisticum*" whereby the distinctness of the human and divine natures in Christ and their respective characteristics is sharply defined. The remainder of Book five considers the various rites and offices prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer of 1559. The final chapters are devoted to a consideration of the "power of order" conferred upon the clergy by ordination.

The sixth book, first published in 1648, half a century after Hooker's death, is undoubtedly the most problematic of the three posthumous books. Although the authenticity of authorship is uncontested, the substance of the argument is not easily reconciled with Hooker's own outline in the Preface. Extant notes by George Cranmer and Edwin Sandys based on a lost early draft of book six, first printed by John Keble in the edition of 1836, suggest that Hooker initially intended to grapple with the question of lay-eldership. The text of the sixth book as it stands consists mainly of a discussion of the "end" of spiritual jurisdiction, namely penitence, rather than the external institutional "means". The book has been described as a "tract of confession." Since Archbishop Ussher's publication of this text in 1648 it has been customary to include it in spite of its being, in Keble's words, "an entire deviation from its subject."¹⁸ In this tractate Hooker outlines the three parts of the penitence as contrition, confession and satisfaction and concludes with a discussion of absolution, although the latter element is not treated as an essential moment. The editors of the Folger edition acknowledge that this tractate was not intended by Hooker as a substitute for his treatment of the lay-eldership but that it nonetheless constitutes an important part of the polemic with respect to spiritual jurisdiction. On these grounds, the tractate on penitence continues to appear as the sixth book of the *Lawes*.

The seventh book, the most polished of the three posthumous books, contains a defense of the jurisdiction of bishops together with a justification of episcopal honours, privileges and temporal benefits. Hooker approaches the question of episcopal government by examining the evidence of the Bible and the authority of the early church Fathers, historians and the decrees of the early Councils. One important source is the Justinian *Corpus juris civilis*. A bishop is defined as possessing the powers of order and spiritual jurisdiction possessed by other ministers together with the additional power to ordain new ministers: "A Bishop is a Minister of God, unto whom with permanent continuance, there is given not onely power of administring the Word and Sacraments, which power other Presbyters have; but also a further power to ordain Ecclesiastical persons, and a power of Cheify in Government over

18 John Keble, Introduction, *Hooker's Works*, ed. R.W. Church, 7thedn. (Oxford: Oxford, 1888), I: xxxiv.

Presbyters as well as Lay men, a power to be by way of jurisdiction a Pastor even to Pastors themselves.”¹⁹ Hooker maintains that the authority of bishops is of human institution. Although their jurisdiction does not originate by direct divine right grounded in the scriptures (*turedivino*), nevertheless human institutions acquire divine approbation such that “the same thing which is of men, may be also justly and truly said to be of God, the same thing from heaven which is from earth.”²⁰ The church as a “politiquesocietie” has in it by nature the power of providing for its own safety and continuance. This power of self-preservation on the part of political bodies consists chiefly in their authority to make laws, for “corporations are immortal.”²¹ On this ground Hooker allows that there may be occasions when, by “exigence of necessity,” the ordination of ministers may justly and reasonably occur without the power of a bishop: “the whole Church visible being the true original subject of all power, it hath ordinarily allowed any other then bishops alone to ordain.”²² Hooker goes on to affirm the role of bishops as judges and civil administrators since in a Christian society the civil and ecclesiastical functions may lawfully be united in one and the same person. Here he summons up the Chalcedonian logic of the unity of the divine and human natures which yet continue to be distinct within the undivided person of Christ.

In the eighth and final book Hooker presents the main elements of his political theory in a defense of the union of church and commonwealth in a Christian state under royal sovereignty. Threads of the argument in all previous books come together in this complex constitutional tapestry. Civil and ecclesiastical power are distinct in “nature” though capable of “personal” union in the Prince. Church and commonwealth represent distinct properties, qualities or actions which can be united in every subject as well. Hooker rejects the “Nestorian” insistence upon the perpetual necessity of a personal separation: “for the truth is that the Church and the Commonwealth are the names which import thinges really different. But those thinges are accidentes and such accidentes as may and should alwayes livingly dwell together in one subject.”²³ Hooker argues for a conciliar theory of the origin of sovereign power. As with episcopacy “unto Kings by humane right honour by very divine right is due.” For Hooker, law is supreme rather than the arbitrary will of the Prince: “Happier that people, whose lawe is their King in the greatest thinges than that whose King is himself their lawe.”²⁴ In a remarkable theological discourse in VIII.4, Hooker defends the royal headship of the church

19 *Lawes*VII.2.3

20 *Lawes*VII.11.10

21 *Lawes*I.10.8; Hooker repeats this legal maxim at VII.14.3

22 *Lawes*VII.14.11

23 *Lawes*VIII.1.5

24 *Lawes*VIII.2.12. Torrance Kirby, “Law makes the King: Richard Hooker on law and princely rule,” in Michael Hattaway, ed., *A New Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, 2nd Edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 2010), 274-288.

by an appeal to the most subtle distinctions of patristic Christological and Trinitarian orthodoxy. In subsequent chapters he addresses the chief royal powers in the church, viz. the prerogative to call assemblies, to appoint prelates, to exercise final judgement in ecclesiastical causes, and as the “uncommanded commander” to be exempt from all forms of judicial punishment by the clergy.²⁵

Hooker’s generic division of laws rests on a carefully defined tension between natural and revealed theology.²⁶ His affirmation of the authority of human reason consequent upon the revelation of the divine wisdom to the observer of “the glorious workes of Nature” is a crucial presupposition of his theologico-political system. A significant number of Hooker’s seventeenth-century readers shared this view and some sought to extend the boundaries of his natural theology a great deal further. His influence ranged over classical “anglo-calvinists” James Ussher, Robert Sanderson and Thomas Barlow; Arminians or “anti-calvinists” William Laud, Jeremy Taylor and Henry Hammond; Cambridge Platonists Benjamin Whichcote, Ralph Cudworth and Nathanael Culverwell; Latitudinarians Edward Stillingfleet, Joseph Glanvill and John Wilkins; and Deists like John Locke and Charles Blount. As the speculative theological discourse of the seventeenth-century Church of England unfolds, natural theology assumes increasing influence. Hooker was often cited as an “orthodox” authority by representatives of radical theological rationalism. In virtually every generation since Hooker’s death theologians have returned to the *Lawes* as to a mirror of first principles of the doctrine and method of the Church of England. Quite often his readers have found distorted and mutually contradictory images there. It is well known, for example, that James II attributed his conversion to Rome to the reading of Hooker and that John Locke chose the *Lawes* as his principal authority for the constitutional limitation of royal power in his *Two Treatises of Government*.²⁷ Throughout the seventeenth century and later attempts were frequently made to claim Hooker in support of a wide variety of divergent theological positions. The diversity of these appeals reflects the complex and elusive character of his thought, and possibly also its claim to comprehensiveness.

25 Torrance Kirby, *Richard Hooker’s Doctrine of the Royal Supremacy* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990).

26 See Torrance Kirby, “The ‘sundriewaies of Wisdom’: Richard Hooker’s sapiential theology,” in Kevin Killeen, ed. *Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

27 See Michael Brydon, *The Evolving Reputation of Richard Hooker: An Examination of Responses, 1600-1714* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Select Bibliography

Primary

- Hill, W. Speed, gen. ed. *The Folger Library Edition of The Works of Richard Hooker*. Vols. 1–5. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. Vols. 1–7. Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1977–98.
- Hooker, Richard. *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, ed. A.S. McGrade. 3 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Secondary

- Atkinson, Nigel. *Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture, Tradition and Reason: Reformed Theologian of the Church of England?* Foreword by Alister McGrath. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 1997.
- ‘Hooker’s Theological Method and Modern Anglicanism.’ *Churchman* 114.1 (2000): 40–70.
- Brydon, Michael. *The Evolving Reputation of Richard Hooker*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Cargill Thompson, W.D.J. *Studies in the Reformation: Luther to Hooker*, ed. C.W. Dugmore. London: Athlone Press, 1980.
- Gibbs, Lee. ‘Book VI of Hooker’s *Lawes* Revisited: the Calvin Connection,’ 243–261. *Richard Hooker and the English Reformation*, ed. Kirby.
- ‘Richard Hooker: Prophet of Anglicanism or English Magisterial Reformer.’ *Anglican Theological Review* 84.4 (2002): 943–960.
- Grislis, Egil. ‘The Hermeneutical Problem in Richard Hooker,’ 159–206. In W. Speed Hill, ed. *Studies in Richard Hooker: Essays Preliminary to an Edition of His Works*. Cleveland, OH: Press of Case Western University, 1972.
- ‘Scriptural Interpretation,’ 273–304. In Torrance Kirby, ed. *A Companion to Richard Hooker*. With a Foreword by Rowan Williams. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008.
- Ingalls, Ranall. ‘Richard Hooker as Interpreter of the Reformed Doctrine of *sola Scriptura*.’ *Anglican and Episcopal History*. 77.4 (2008): 351–378.
- Joyce, A.J. *Richard Hooker and Anglican Moral Theology*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Kaye, Bruce N. ‘Authority and Interpretation of Scripture in Hooker’s *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*.’ *Journal of Religious History* 21 (1997): 80–109.
- Kirby, Torrance, ed. *A Companion to Richard Hooker*, with a Foreword by Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008.
- ed. *Richard Hooker and the English Reformation*. Dordrecht, Boston, London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003.
- Richard Hooker, Reformer and Platonist*. Aldershot, Hants and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005.
- Richard Hooker’s Doctrine of the Royal Supremacy*. Studies in the History of Christian Thought 43. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990.
- The Theology of Richard Hooker in the Context of the Magisterial Reformation*. Studies in Reformed Theology and History. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Theological Seminary, 2000.
- ‘Richard Hooker’s Theory of Natural Law in the Context of Reformation Theology.’ *Sixteenth Century Journal* 30.3 (1999): 681–703.
- ‘Richard Hooker as an Apologist of the Magisterial Reformation in England,’ 219–233. In *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community*, ed. A.S. McGrade. Tempe, AZ: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1997.
- ‘Richard Hooker.’ In *The Continuum Encyclopedia of British Philosophy*, ed. Anthony Grayling and Andrew Pyle. Vol. 2. London and New York: Thoemmes Continuum, 2006.

- Kraye, Jill. *Classical Traditions in Renaissance Philosophy*. Aldershot, Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2002.
- Miller, Charles. *Richard Hooker and the Vision of God: Exploring the Origins of Anglicanism*. Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2013.
- Neelands, W. David. 'Hooker on Scripture, Reason, and "Tradition",' 75-94. In *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community*, ed. A.S. McGrade. Tempe, AZ: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1997.
- Stafford, John K., ed. *Lutheran and Anglican: Essays in Honour of Egil Grislis*. Winnipeg: St. John's College Press, 2009.
- Voak, Nigel. *Richard Hooker and Reformed Theology: a study of Reason, Will, and Grace*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Williams, Rowan. 'Hooker: Philosopher, Anglican, Contemporary,' 369-375. In *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community*, ed. A.S. McGrade. Tempe, AZ: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1997.