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**Inherited flaws: The problem of circularity in Hooker's "Of the
Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie"**

Goldblatt, Mark Meyer, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1990

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INHERITED FLAWS: THE PROBLEM OF CIRCULARITY
IN HOOKER'S OF THE LAWES OF ECCLESIASTICALL
POLITIE

by

Mark Goldblatt

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in English in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
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1990

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Abstract

INHERITED FLAWS: THE PROBLEM OF CIRCULARITY IN HOOKER'S OF THE
LAWES OF ECCLESIASTICALL POLITIE

by

Mark Goldblatt

Adviser: Professor W. Speed Hill

The question of the proper sphere of human reason, to a considerable extent, underlay the late 16th century exchange between Richard Hooker and his puritan antagonists. Hooker saw the exercise of reason as a God-sanctioned activity, and thus he considered "reasonableness" a viable criterion by which to assess even a spiritual practice. The puritans argued, on the contrary, that reason was merely a secular tool--and thus of no moment in issues pertaining to the salvation of the soul. What follows from the puritan position is an extreme reliance upon the revealed word of God, the bible, as a guide to every aspect of Christian life. By contrast, Hooker regarded reason

and revelation as complementary. The role of scripture was to reveal that which was necessary for a man's salvation that he could not otherwise discover by the light of his own reason.

Although the debate within the English Church concerned ecclesiastical polity, its intellectual roots can be traced back through the respective theologies of Saint Thomas and Saint Augustine, and even further back to the philosophies of Aristotle and Plato. It is my contention that Hooker's epic defense of the English Church, Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie, rests upon a dogmatic assertion, derived from Thomas, of the spiritual efficacy of natural reason. Hooker premised what his opposition would never allow, namely a rational God. From this premise, the lines of his case follow. But I argue that the concept of a rational God, even in Saint Thomas, is itself problematic enough to render Hooker's reliance upon it an act of supernatural faith. Because Hooker's premise cannot be justified in strictly rational terms, his argument must be considered circular.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is an anachronism in several respects. To begin with, the subject, Richard Hooker's Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie, stands as the culmination of a fairly obscure late Tudor polemical exchange known as the Admonition Controversy. The question at the center of the controversy was how far the reformation of the English Church should proceed. This was a question of moment among Englishmen of the late sixteenth century, for it touched upon not only the conduct of religious ceremonies but also upon the relationship between a Christian monarch and a national church. In Hooker's own lifetime, and indeed for a good period afterwards, this was no mere intellectual exercise. Less than a half century after his

death, the lines drawn in the Admonition debate became more or less the lines of the English Civil War.

Yet, as W. Speed Hill has noted, "Literary scholars know the controversy, if they know it at all, via the satiric lens of the Marprelate tracts, a late and notably radical sortie from the presbyterian side" (17th C. News 39). And it might be contended that Martin Marprelate himself survives less because of the what he said than how he said it; his medium was the pamphlet, and his method was ad hominem. We return to him nowadays in large part because he's rather funny, because he goes after his opponents themselves rather than their arguments. History, on the other hand, has produced few writers less funny than Richard Hooker. The tone of his massive treatise is considered, the prose majestic. The very fact that he managed to rise above the personal attacks that characterized much of the exchange serves oddly to dehumanize him for many modern readers.

The selection of Hooker's Laws is anachronistic too with respect to the department under whose auspices the project has been undertaken. The case could be made that Hooker belongs as much to the field of philosophy or religion or even political science as he does to English Literature. As it happens, the first time I ever heard Hooker's name was in the context of

his appropriateness for literary study. It was in a seminar on Shakespeare. The professor, a very practical man, was asked by an eager-to-please graduate student which writers of the Renaissance were "dissertationable." The professor's response was that virtually all of them were, ". . . except that you wouldn't want to pick someone like Richard Hooker because he falls between disciplines." This remark served as a gauntlet, as I recall. Suddenly, I wanted to know more about this writer who constituted a kind of demilitarized zone between between academic territories.

What I discovered was that it was precisely the fact that Hooker could be embraced by various fields that made him such an attractive figure. As a philosopher, he ranks with Francisco Suarez and Cardinal Bellarmine as the foremost Thomists of his age (Munz "Hooker" 64). As a theologian, his work stands beside Calvin's Institutes and Luther's collected writings as the principal documents of the Protestant Reformation. And as a political scientist, his influence was to be acknowledged by Locke--and thus it could be argued that Hooker's thought, at least indirectly, played a role in the framing of the United States Constitution.

Still, the question remains whether Hooker can or should be studied as literature. To be sure, if we enlarge the canon

to include works whose significance is more historical than aesthetic--I am thinking in particular of the puritan journals of William Bradford--then Hooker belongs. But even on artistic grounds, a case can be made for him. In the course of his work, he utilizes such signature devices of literature as metaphor and hyperbole. Yet we must remain cautious not to overstate Hooker's aesthetic aims. The metaphors that crop up in his prose are never strictly for their own sakes but always to forward his argument.

Still, it is clear from the very first sentences of Laws that Hooker intends, at least secondarily, to create a work of enduring beauty. As he anticipates future puritan criticism of his work as too obscure, his prose seems the product of a writer whose aims are not entirely syllogistic:

The stateliness of houses, the goodliness of trees, when we behold them delighteth the eye; but that foundation which beareth up the one, that root which ministreth unto the other nourishment and life, is in the bosome of the earth concealed: and if there be at any time occasion to search into it, such labour is then more necessary then pleasant both to them which undertake it, and for the lookers on. In like maner the use and benefite of good laws, all that live under them may enjoy wih delight and comfort, albeit the groundes and first originall causes from whence they have sprong be unknowne, as to the greatest part of men they are. (1.1.2)

The rhythms of this sentence are telling--this is an artist as well as a polemicist. The syllabic balance of "statelinesse of houses" and "goodlines of trees" is exact and persuasive, and it is counterpointed by the balance of "that foundation which beareth up the one" and "that root which minstreth unto the other" in the following clause. The choices of metaphors are telling as well. The "good lawes" he is about to defend at such length are likened to houses and trees--objects whose common associations encompass shelter and beauty, art and nature. Rather than dwell upon the restrictive aspects of law, he presents "good lawes" as a haven which exists so that "all that live under them may enjoy with delight and comfort." The foundations are deep, the roots nourishing. Laws are at once beautiful and natural. Also concealed in these lines is a sly disclaimer. Hooker concedes that the task he is about to undertake, namely, an examination of the foundations and roots of laws, is "more necessary then pleasant"--yet he contends that the unpleasantness is shared by both "them which undertake it" and "the lookers on." He not only underscores the necessity of the task, he implies regret that that necessity has ever arisen. Thus, by implication, he holds the puritans to blame for the very "obscuritie" that he anticipates they will find in the Lawes.

Yet having paused briefly to acknowledge the subtleties of Hooker's prose, I do not intend to address the question of aesthetics in the Laws. For Hooker himself, literary devices are simply a means to an end. Whatever rhetorical "art" he invested in his masterpiece remains, I think, secondary to the central purpose of the work. And that purpose was to formulate a rationally coherent defense of the Church of England. It is my plan to examine the coherence of that defense.

There is yet another anachronistic element of this dissertation, which is the approach. The very notion that Hooker's stated intention should act as a yardstick for assessing his success or failure is at odds with numerous current trends of academic scholarship. The age of the Intentional Fallacy is still very much with us, and for good reason: the premise that the writer does not create what he intends to create has been a great boon for the modern critic--it has elevated him above the writer, at least in an interpretive sense. What has been sacrificed, however, is joyous and often therapeutic surrender of ego which used to infuse the effort of reading. There is no question that every reader brings a new set of connotations to the words of each new text that he reads. But the very act of reading, it seems to me, involves a willed suspension of those connotations so

as to explore what the words denoted for the author. If the exploration can never yield absolute certitude, that does not mean that a heirarchy of likelihoods cannot be posited, that a range of meanings cannot be established. Trite as it sounds, I think there comes a time when you've simply got to take a writer at his word:

Nor is mine owne intent any other in these severall bookes of discourse then to make it appeare unto you, that for the ecclesiasticall lawes of this land, we are led by great reason to observe them, and yee by no necessitie bound to impugne them. (Pref.7.1)

These words do not strike me as equivocal. Hooker sets out to defend the ecclesiastical structure of the Church of England against the cries for greater reformation that were sounded in his time. He proposes to do so by demonstrating that people "are led by great reason" to observe those practices that are at present in place, and that the would-be reformers are "by no necessitie bound to impugne them." Such issues as implied readership and the schismatic relationship between signifier and signified do not alter the words on the page--except perhaps in the minds' eyes of certain twentieth century critics.

To be sure, the passage above could be "deconstructed." Submerged senses of the words could be combed out which would spin Hooker like a dynamo in his grave. But the truth is that no one with a coherent grasp of logic takes post-structuralism seriously.¹ Such linguistic-based trends in scholarship have served in recent times to evaporate the traditional critical loci of author and text. What I've presupposed, therefore, in this dissertation is that a person named Richard Hooker, who

¹ The proposition "No one with a coherent grasp of logic takes post-structuralism seriously" could be construed as erroneous in two ways. The first would be if it were self-contradictory. As it happens, it is not. But even if it were, Jacques Derrida describes the concept of the "arche-trace" as "contradictory and not acceptable within the logic of identity" (Grammatology 61). He then proceeds to build his case on it. The second way the proposition "No one with a coherent grasp of logic takes post-structuralism seriously" could be construed as erroneous would be if it contradicted previously known truths. Yet as Jonathan Culler points out, "Structuralists are convinced that systematic knowledge is possible; post-structuralists claim to know only the impossibility of this knowledge" (On Decon. 22). If systematic knowledge is impossible, then there is no such thing as previously known truths. Thus the proposition "No one with a coherent grasp of logic takes post-structuralism seriously" cannot be construed as erroneous--at least not by a post-structuralist. As for what Culler says, his statement is self-contradictory: to know the impossibility of knowledge is absurd. But if we grant him his absurdity, as Derrida would, we must ask how he arrived at the knowledge. He cannot have inferred it from observations of the world--for then he would have to know the validity of the rules of inductive logic. (He states that post-structuralists know only the impossibility of knowledge. Since the impossibility of knowledge cannot be the conclusion of logical analysis, it must be taken as dogmatic, held in defiance of logic. It's a kind of mystical conclusion. That is why the language of post-structuralism must be read as incantational rather than logically rigorous.

lived and breathed in the last half of the sixteenth century, wrote a religious tract entitled: Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie; in writing the tract his purpose was to defend the status quo of the Church of England, or, as he states, to "maintaine thinges that are established" (1.1.1). If it is academic heresy, in 1990, to take Hooker at his word in this, then I am guilty. Indeed, my dissertation is wrought upon the Intentional Fallacy. For I propose to read and to evaluate Hooker's work strictly in terms of his stated intention.

To do this, it is of course necessary at every point to suppose the text itself accurate. It is with great confidence that I have used the critically established text of the Folger Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker, edited by W. Speed Hill; also, I've had access to introductions and commentaries to the Lawes that comprise the forthcoming sixth volume in the series. The very existence of such material implies the belief that Hooker's words matter, that his sentences have primary senses. Perhaps this is to fall prey to what Terry Eagleton has termed "the terrorism of meaning" (Benjamin 132).

Aside from Professor Eagleton's somewhat obscene turn of phrase (What follows the "terrorism of meaning"? The "genocide of punctuation"?), the proposition that the written

word is bereft of primary meaning simply flies in the face of common sense. This might not particularly distress Eagleton, who in his book Literary Theory remarks:

Common sense holds that things generally have only one meaning and that this meaning is usually obvious, inscribed on the faces of objects we encounter. The world is pretty much as we perceive it, and our way of perceiving it is the natural self-evident one. We know the sun goes round the earth because we can see that it does. At different times common sense has dictated burning witches, hanging sheep-stealers and avoiding Jews for fear of fatal infection, but this statement is not itself commonsensical since common sense believes itself to be historically invariable. Thinkers who have argued that the apparent meaning is not the real one have usually been met with scorn . . . (108)

It is hard to know how to respond to such an argument, loaded as it is with a politics of epistemological and, subsequently, moral relativism. What must be said is that the instances that Eagleton cites are far from randomly chosen. Whether these in fact comprise failures on the part of common sense, or rather interpretive failures on the part of the intellect as a whole, will depend upon the definition of common sense to which one subscribes. Yet even allowing Eagleton his point, that common sense has succumbed on numerous occasions to misinterpretation, bigotry, and blatant error, on the balance common sense has acquitted itself rather well. If indeed it

missed the boat on geocentrism, common sense observations of seasonal climates made possible agriculture--which wrought permanent communities from nomadic tribes. And even if we are persuaded that common sense is not infallible, must it therefore be abandoned? For Eagleton, "the fact that structuralism offends common sense has always been a point in its favour" (ibid.). If the advocacy of self-evident truths has led, as Eagleton suggests, to "burning witches," "hanging sheep-stealers," and "avoiding Jews," has it not also fostered those truths held self-evident by Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence? For all his condescension, I wonder if Eagleton has thought through just how facile and justifiable oppression becomes in a world bereft of all self-evident truths.

What Eagleton chooses to ignore in his glib dismissal is that the primary mode of common sense is not interpretive but formal. The principle of contradiction, for instance, the idea that a predicate cannot simultaneously be affirmed and denied, is a common-sense principle. It was not found inscribed upon a cave wall and subsequently venerated, nor is it a conspiracy propagated by a cult of white male elitists. Rather, it is common sense precisely because it is common. No human society has ever functioned except by the tacit or explicit

acknowledgement of this principle. And indeed it is this formal aspect of common sense which allows Eagleton to cite the seeming failures of common sense in order to build his case. As Hooker might have replied to Eagleton: "They never use reason so willingly as to disgrace reason" (3.8.4).

Naturally, this is not the proper forum to address fully Eagleton's remarks. Yet his words warrant at least a cursory mention for two reasons: first, because common-sense readings and common-sense reasonings are invoked on a consistent basis throughout this dissertation; and second, because Eagleton's case bears a subtle yet uncanny resemblance to the overriding objection with which Hooker himself had to contend.

To glimpse this, we must acknowledge (however regrettably) that a critic like Eagleton, a critic whose premises are anti-common sense, would be unimpressed by the argument I've just made. For even as Hooker's prose can be deconstructed, so too the preceding paragraphs, this preface itself, might be deconstructed, the words stripped of their primary and intended meanings and reconstituted into something I would not recognize. There is, hence, an inherent circularity in the case I've forwarded here: I've happily presupposed the logical validity of grammatical predication in order to argue that words are to be used in a logical way. I've taken for granted,

in other words, that language itself bears a somewhat fixed and representational relationship with the real world. To me, this is a matter of common sense, and I think it nihilistic to hold otherwise; but a self-conscious commitment to reason forces me to acknowledge the fundamental circularity of this reasoning.

Hooker's case must likewise bear the onus of his self-conscious rationalism. The principal objection he faced, as we shall see, was the Calvinist contention that reason itself is not decisive in matters of spiritual well-being. Hooker is thus rendered vulnerable by a circular logic of his own: because his defense against the radical factions within the English Church entails picking apart the logic of their arguments, he will always leave his antagonists their great epistemological "out." When all else fails, they can (and did) harp upon the merely logical validity of Hooker's case--and then proceed to contend that human logic is not binding upon God or authoritative in the spiritual matters of His creatures.

Yet even within Hooker's case, built upon the natural law philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, there are several difficulties which undermine some of his most critical conclusions. These will be the focus of the first chapter. The remainder of the

dissertation will concentrate upon the ramifications of these difficulties and on how they underscore the basic circularity of Hooker's system. Throughout, principal points of reference will be the four great Christian voices with whom Hooker must come to terms: Thomas Aquinas, Augustine of Hippo, Martin Luther, and John Calvin.

Because he builds his defense from the ground up, it is against the theological thought of these figures, as well as that of his English contemporaries, that Hooker's achievement must finally be measured.

The notion that Hooker's achievement can, or even should, be measured leads us to the final possible anachronism of this dissertation. The question to which my thesis is addressed is ultimately ahistorical: it is the question of whether, and in what sense, Hooker was "right." This is almost a quaint issue to be concerned with, given the widespread epistemological relativism of the moment. To be sure, the question of Hooker's consistency has been taken up on several notable occasions in the past (see Afterword), and the consensus seems to be that he is consistent, that his argument does cohere. But none of

these assessments deals with the possibility that the Thomism upon which Hooker grounds his argument is itself flawed--leaving Hooker's case contingent upon a preference for Saint Thomas over Saint Augustine that should rightly be construed as an act of supernatural faith rather than natural reason. That is what I will be trying to demonstrate.

Thus I intend this work as a kind of corrective. Everett Emerson notes that in the Hooker-Travers debate which spawned the Lawes, "posterity has given the palm to Hooker" (82). The best that can be said for Travers is that he "won the hearts of his hearers" (ibid.). But even this is a kind of backhanded compliment, for Travers won his hearers' hearts rather than their minds. What is implicit in much of the scholarship on the controversy is that Hooker's conformism is simply more defensible, on a rational basis, than puritanism.

My intention, however, is not to demonstrate that Hooker was wrong, only that he was not right--that neither side in the debate stood upon reason alone, and that the lines of the debate were inevitable once certain epistemological premises were accepted. Peter Munz hints at, though he does not follow through to, the necessary circularity of Hooker's case:

Their [the puritans'] views were actually a denial of philosophy and of a philosophical mode or

argument. If Hooker marshalled a philosophical argument against Puritanism, he did it in order to satisfy his own craving for philosophical clarity, and because in order to argue at all one had to assume that one's opponents' case was based on thoughts that could be expressed in philosophical terms. (Place of Hooker 46)

Munz's point is a bit overstated. The puritans' views did not constitute an outright "denial of philosophy" but, as we shall see, a limitation of the proper sphere of philosophical debate. However, Munz is quite correct insofar as there was no possibility that Hooker's puritan opponents were going to be won over by his argument; in that sense, the Laws may justly be seen as intended for Hooker himself and for those already counted in the conformist cause--it is, after all, a defense. Since Hooker's cause was the status quo, it was incumbent upon his opponents to take the offensive. This metaphor is implicit in Leonard Trinterud's summary of Hooker's intention:

All through his Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, Hooker drove a distinction between the visible and the invisible church, between church polity and salvation, between the law of the monarch and the law of God. He asserted that what he called "polity" . . . was not in itself necessary to salvation but was merely the furthering of obedience to an authority that was grounded in right reason. This assertion, coupled with the virtual identification under Whitgift of the episcopate with the Crown, constituted the seemingly impregnable fortress from within which the ecclesiastical authorities--Hooker's "we"--

held out against all criticism and opposition.
(391-392)

The specific issues to which Trinterud alludes we shall have occasion to examine later. But his metaphor of a "fortress" is significant. A fortress is a sanctuary, a place into which to retreat in times of attack. The question is whether or not the fortress that Hooker wrought was indeed "impregnable."

Hooker's own hope was that it would be. He writes in Book I of the Lawes:

I have endeavoured throughout the bodie of this whole discourse, that every former part might give strength unto all that followe, and every later bring some light unto all before. (1.1.2)

The idea that parts might "give strength" to other parts is itself suggestive of a fortress, of the desire to fortify in the etymological sense. His hope indeed is to build something that is logically impregnable, that is able to withstand the most sophisticated logical probings, and for that reason, as we shall see, he dismisses with scorn the rhetorical shortcuts of "Ramysty" (1.6.4).

What I will argue, however, is that Hooker's fortress was not impregnable--even if it might have seemed so, at the time,

to his antagonists. As John Booty remarks in his introduction to A Christian Letter, the puritan response to Hooker's Lawes:

. . . the Letter seemingly grants Hooker's main arguments and seems to be the product of a group which in 1593 had suffered a severe setback with the passage of the Conventicle Act and all that it implied concerning the victory of the establishment over the Puritan cause. Defeated and defeatist, they produced a short tract, clumsily composed, not very clever or wise in the construction of their argument. (Volume 4.xxvi)

If in the end the puritans could not answer the logic of the Lawes, that does not necessarily entail that their position was insupportable. Rather, to return to the metaphor of the fortress, the puritans were unable to muster a sufficiently logical offense to break through the walls. But it is doubtful whether Hooker's Lawes would itself be of use in an offensive mode. So much of it is constructed around the idea that what is established need not be altered that it would be difficult to conceive of the Lawes as anything but a defense. Given the reality of the Church of England, the best the puritans could have gotten was a standoff. The Elizabethan puritans failed even in this, I believe, because their assaults were aimed broadside rather than at the foundations. To "draw" Hooker, it was necessary to undermine Saint Thomas. The puritans followed Calvin in their rejection of Thomas, but to reject is not the

same thing as to undermine. Given the status quo of the Church of England, rejecting the basis of conformists' position was not enough. The basis had to be compromised. It never happened.

The aim of this study, then, is necessarily ahistorical. I want to demonstrate that the puritans could have utilized the rigors of syllogistic reasoning in order to point out that their argument was no less defensible, no more circular than Hooker's. This is not to imply that the puritan case was any less circular, or any more defensible. Rather, my purpose is to show that both sides must in the end fall back on acts of non-rational, and therefore equally-justified, supernatural faith.

The French rationalist philosopher Pierre Bayle (1647-1706) wrote:

In short, there's so much probability, any Worship which subsists on a Falsehood, will one time or other degenerate, that we shou'd never give Quarter to Error, of what kind, or on what Pretences soever. (cited by Norman Kemp Smith 1)

If either side of the conformist-puritan debate were one that "subsists on a Falsehood," if either side were logically vulnerable, then we should not find the temples of their descendents around today.

CHAPTER I: THE PROBLEMATICS OF THOMISM

To glimpse the fundamental circularity of Hooker's Lawes, we must first investigate, at least briefly, the rational base on which he grounds his defense, Thomism. What I want to argue is that Hooker's reliance upon Saint Thomas is, in effect, no less dogmatic, and no more reasonable, than his antagonists' reliance upon Saint Augustine. This would not be the case if Thomism itself were flawless, if its theological conclusions followed naturally from its epistemological premises, if its logic were impeccable from start to finish. If such were the case, then Hooker's adoption of the Thomistic synthesis for his defense would constitute an entirely justified rational choice instead of a dogmatic preference. But in the discussion

that follows I will argue the opposite: that Thomism is itself problematic enough to render Hooker's reliance upon it an act of faith rather than reason. And that faith, in turn, renders Hooker's defense of the Church of England logically circular.

Several interdependent questions are raised in Thomas's explication of the relationship between human reason and God's existence. These include whether knowledge of an infinite God can be had by finite human minds, in what sense predication of God must understood, and how God's eternity can be reconciled with the temporality of the world. Now I will argue that in the answers that Thomas gives to these questions, the seams of his theology and epistemology begin to show. But in order to understand this, we must begin, literally, "in the beginning."

In Question 45 of the Summa Theologica, Thomas designates creation as "the emanation of all being" (Art. 1), and he then continues:

Hence if the emanation of the whole universal being from the first principle be considered, it is impossible that any being should be presupposed to this emanation. Now nothing is the same as no being. Therefore as the generation of man presupposes the non-being which is non-man, so creation, which is the emanation of all being, presupposes the non-being which is nothing.
(ibid.)

What is critical in this passage is that the world, the whole of creation, is identified by Thomas as coextensive with being, and in particular with that sense of being which is predicated of all things. Now "being" must be understood to encompass whatever "either actually or possibly exists,"² whatever is or can be--and that in turn entails that "non-being" encompass whatever is not and cannot be. Non-being, therefore, is identified by Thomas as no thing, or nothing.

But the distinction between what can be and what cannot be is meaningless except in light of the first principles of reason: Identity, Contradiction, and Excluded Middle. Stated in the broadest possible terms, these rules signify the core of self-evidentiality: that a thing is what it is; that a thing cannot simultaneously be and not be (or that a predicate cannot at once be affirmed and denied); that a thing must either be or not be. For Aristotle, these rules are the "starting-points of demonstration" in that they have to be presupposed in order for the very process of logical demonstration to be undertaken:

By the starting-points of demonstration I mean the common beliefs, on which all men base their

² The gloss is traditional. The quotation here is taken from Armand Maurer's notes to his translation of Thomas's On Being And Essence.

proofs, e.g. that everything must be either affirmed or denied, and that a thing cannot at the same time be and not be, and all other such propositions. (Metaphysics 3.2.2)

It is only with reference to these first principles, these "starting-points of demonstration," that Thomas can describe being in terms of possibility. For example, a sentient stone cannot be. It is contradiction in terms: for a stone is by definition a non-sentient being, which means that a sentient stone would be "a sentient non-sentient being." The fact that its definition entails a clear contradiction, a predicate at once affirmed and denied, renders a sentient stone inconceivable and denies it even the possibility of being. But how, the question might be raised, can we be so certain that sentient stones do not exist in other worlds? What if in the future a space probe sets down on a remote moon of Jupiter and a stone cries out in pain? The answer is that the moment this "stone" registers a sensation, it ceases to be non-sentient. It ceases, in other words, to be a stone. The contradiction, in other words, can never be reconciled.

If truth is comprised of the correspondence between the mind and being, as the Aristotelian-Thomist school describes it, then whatever cannot be in a logical sense, whatever is inconceivable, cannot be in a real sense. The effect of the

Correspondence Theory of Truth³ is to draw the horizon of being upon our eyes. That is, since truth consists of a mind-to-thing correspondence, two contradictory propositions cannot be true at the same time. Even as the rational mind rejects contradiction, so too the rational spectrum of being rejects them.

Indeed, the knowable world cannot be defined except in terms of being. As Thomas points out, "Now everything is knowable in as far as it has being" (ST 1a. Q16. Art.3). He then proceeds to expand upon the relationship between truth and being:

But the true cannot be apprehended unless the notion of being be also apprehended; since being is included in the notion of the true. The case is the same if we were to compare the intelligible object with being. For being cannot be understood except because being is intelligible. (ibid.)

When Thomas remarks that "being cannot be understood except because being is intelligible," he has drawn the horizon of being--and therefore of the world--upon our eyes. Predication

3 For a more detailed discussion of truth as the conformity or correspondence between the mind and being, see Peter Coffey's Epistemology or the Theory of Knowledge, pages 39-43; or see Jacques Maritain's An Introduction to Philosophy, pages 126-129. These are representative introductions to the school of Moderate Realism in philosophy to which Aristotle, Thomas and Hooker subscribe.

invokes the principles of thought, "intelligibility" as he calls it, which as we have seen are also the principles of being.

But the first three principles that together comprise the foundation for rational thought, Identity, Contradiction and Excluded Middle, do not in themselves allow us to account for our conception of the world around us--as Aristotle himself implies when he refers to "all other such propositions" above. They do not, for example, account for the reality of change--which might seem to undermine all of the principles. The being which is a man at present will, over the course of the next hundred years, cease to be a man and become dust. Its identity will change, and change utterly, from a rational animal to a heap of lifeless matter: from sentient being to non-sentient being. Natural reason dictates that the two predicates cannot coexist within a single essence, that as the essence comes to be dust it ceases to be a man. Yet this cessation of identity within the same being would lead to rational chaos unless understood in terms of an efficient cause. As Peter Coffey comments in his study of Scholasticism, Ontology or The General Theory of Being:

That any being which is contingent could exist independently of some other actual being as the

cause of this existence; that it could have come into existence or begun from absolute nothingness, or be produced or brought into actual existence without any actual being to produce it; or that, once existing and subject to change, it could undergo change and have its potentialities actualized without any actual being to cause such change--all this is positively unthinkable and absolutely repugnant to our intelligence; all this our reason peremptorily declares to be intrinsically impossible. Nor is there a mere question of psychological inconceivability, such as might be due to a long-continued custom of associating the idea of a "beginning" with the idea of a "cause" of this beginning--as phenomenists generally contend. There is question of an impossibility which our reason categorically dictates to be a real, ontological impossibility. The Principle of Causality is therefore a necessary, a priori, self-evident principle.
(Coffey 370)

Coffey's point is dogmatic, but perhaps it may be demonstrated in terms of the correspondence between the mind and being. Logical definitions such as rational animal or sentient being are the abstracted concepts by which we apprehend identities. Yet logical definitions are unchanging, and thus they cannot account for the observable phenomenon of change unless we tie each change to a particular cause. For if we suppose that an essence can change from X to Not-X in and of itself, that what is potential can blossom into what is actual without a causal nudge, that change can be divorced from all particulars of circumstance which would determine a cause, we are led to

the conclusion that essences can never be determined, that identities cannot be fixed, and that change is arbitrary. The consequences would be intellectually chaotic. Scientific (or inductive) method, which presupposes determined results from identical objects under identical conditions, would be undone. The correspondence between the unchanging concepts of the mind and the changing face of experiential being disintegrates without the fourth principle of natural reason, which is Principle of Causality: basically, it states that since all change involves a greater or lesser loss of identity, for every effect, or change, there must be an efficient cause.

Identity, Contradiction, Excluded Middle, and Causality are thus the first four principles predicated of being as soon as the Correspondence Theory of Truth is invoked. For unless the first principles of reason correspond with the ontological order of the world, truth cannot be had. The drawing of the horizon of being upon our eyes entails that whatever is inconceivable, in the literal sense, cannot be.

Yet the principles of reason, themselves, come in the end to undermine the rational mind's investigation of God. For the relationship between God and being, and hence between God and reason, is problematic, if not downright paradoxical. Remember that "being" is the primary predication that underlies every

subsequent predication, every layer of knowledge. Whenever we assert that a thing is, whenever we attach a copula to the subject of a predication, we mean that the thing exists in constant conformity with the fundamental principles of being--or else the predication would be meaningless. If, for example, we assert "Socrates is mortal," we simultaneously deny the logical contradictory, "Socrates is not mortal." For in the very act of predication, we render Socrates within the realm of being and rule out the possibility of a contradiction within the confines of his existence. Before we solve the particulars of what a subject is, we affirm that it can be: we predicate being itself of the subject.

The predication of being is a sine qua non for knowledge, whether the subject happens to be Socrates or the whole world. So let us speak of the world, taken as a single whole. Now it cannot be that the world is uncaused, for the principle of Causality will not permit an uncaused effect. If we admit even the chance that the world is an uncaused effect, we sever the correspondence between the human mind and the world. Truth itself perishes upon that admission, since the world serves as the locus of what we know to be true.

Saint Thomas, of course, wrought his five proofs for the existence of God upon just this idea--that the universe cannot

be conceived as an effect without an efficient cause. He thus reasons that a First Cause must exist, which is "what all men speak of as God" (ST 1a. Q2. Art.3). But there is a problem with this argument, a problem clearly glimpsed in light of the first principles that Thomas himself invokes (Art.1). He argues:

Now in efficient causes it is not possible to go on to infinity, because in all efficient causes following in order, the first is the cause of the intermediate cause, and the intermediate is the cause of the ultimate cause, whether the intermediate cause be several, or one only. Now to take away the cause is to take away the effect. Therefore, if there be no first cause among efficient causes, there will be no ultimate, nor any intermediate, cause. But if in efficient causes it is possible to go on to infinity, there will be no first efficient cause, neither will there be an ultimate effect, nor any intermediate efficient causes; all of which is plainly false. Therefore it is necessary to admit a first efficient cause, to which everyone gives the name of God. (Q.2 Art.3)

What Thomas is wrestling with here is the possibility of an infinite series of efficient causes, which he wants to rule out. His rationale seems sound enough: infinity implies no beginning, therefore no first cause, which then rules out mediate causes, which rules out ultimate effects--which rules out the existence of the world. Yet the world exists. Thus, a first cause must exist. Actually, this is an argument from

contingency as much as causation: the world, as a contingent fact, needs to be accounted for; it cannot be accounted for by another contingent fact, because that fact too would need to be accounted for: without a necessary fact to account for all contingent facts, nothing would ever have come into existence, or continue in existence. Thomas thus comes to speak of God as the Necessary Existence to account for contingent existences, as the First Cause to account for subsequent causes, as the Infinite Being to account for finite being.

What I want to suggest, however, is that "Infinite Being" is a contradiction in terms, just like "sentient stone." To understand this, let us return once again to the idea of the world itself, taken as a whole. Now Thomas argues, in one of the more controversial⁴ passages of the Summa Theologica, that although the world must have had an efficient cause, it need not have had a beginning. Thomas held that the question of the world's beginning was a matter of faith, "not of demonstration or science" (ST 1a. Q46. Art.2). The world, he contends, might be as old as God, for creation was not an act of motion:

⁴ See, for example, Saint Bonaventure's objections to the possible eternity of the world in Commentary on the Sentences, Dist. 1. See also Thomas's own brief response to criticism of his idea of eternity, directed against the Averroists, in De Aeternitate Mundi.

. . . we must consider that an efficient cause which acts by motion of necessity precedes its effect in time; for the effect exists only in the end of the action, and every agent must be the beginning of action. But if the action is instantaneous and not successive, it is not necessary for the maker to be prior in duration to the thing made, as appears in the case of illumination. Hence it does not follow necessarily that if God is the active cause of the world, He must be prior to the world in duration; because creation, by which He produced the world, is not a successive change, as was said above. (ibid.)

There is, though, a flaw in Thomas's reasoning. For by his own reckoning, God is eternal. And he accepts Boethius' definition of eternity as "the simultaneously-whole and perfect possession of interminable life" (ST 1a. Q10. Art. 1). So defined, eternity can only be ascribed to a thing in which there is no succession, "no before and after" (ibid.). But in the world, there is succession. There is "before and after." Thus the world, strictly speaking, cannot be eternal. But can its age be infinite? That would allow for its existence "from eternity," if not for its specific "eternality."

Let us suppose that the world had no beginning, that it has been forever in existence. Necessarily then we would have to consider the age of the world as infinite: that is, its age as measured by any definite unit--whether minute or hour, year or millenium--could not be calculated. Now we have grown

accustomed to infinity as a mathematical construct, a "potential value." But when we shift to the realm of real being, the idea of an infinite magnitude or multitude ceases to refer, for it is self-contradictory in real reference. Thomas himself rules out the possibility of an infinite magnitude or multitude existing at a given moment (1a. Q7. Art. 3,4), although a potential infinite is possible. For instance, a line may potentially be divided an infinite number of times, but at no point will the total number of divisions come to infinity. Likewise, future time may be conceived of as potentially infinite, years can be added one by one ad infinitum, but at no point in the future will the actual amount of years added total infinity. In the same way, the number of years from the present backwards in time to the moment of creation cannot total infinity either. For we have arrived at the present moment: it is actualized here and now. It is not a "potential value" that can never be reached. We have reached it: it is present.

The reason that infinity can never be actualized in any respect (magnitude, multitude, or duration) is that it constitutes a numeric plural, a hypothetical sequence of ever-increasing values. It is not a single amount, a very large number, "X," but an endless series of large numbers: X, X+1,

X+2, X+3, X+4, and so on. To predicate infinity of a thing, in any respect, is to ascribe the values of X and X+1 simultaneously. But X+1 is also "Not-X"; the predication of infinity thus becomes the predication of X and Not-X simultaneously, which violates the principle of Contradiction. Thomas touches upon this point himself in Question 85:

. . . it is impossible for one and the same subject to be perfected at the same time by many forms of one genus and diverse species, just as it is impossible for one and the same body to have different colors and shapes. (ST 1a. Q85. Art.4).

To illustrate this idea in more familiar terms, consider that it is impossible for a person to be two heights at the same time. Even if he is growing, he cannot be six feet and six-feet-one-inch simultaneously. Since "six-feet-one-inch" is also by definition "not-six feet," which would render his height six-feet and not-six feet at once--which violates the principle of Contradiction. It is the same predicate affirmed and denied. Likewise, a person cannot be two ages at the same time, 32 and 33 for example, which are two "diverse species" under "one genus"--in this case, the genus of age is divided into species by year. Infinity, thus, since it is a numeric plural, cannot be ascribed actually of a thing. It would be "the same thing perfected at the same time by many forms of

one genus and diverse species." It would be, as we have seen, an actual self-contradiction.

It is critical to recall that whatever violates the first principles of reason also violates the fundamental principles of being: such a thing cannot be. If indeed we subscribe to the Correspondence Theory of Truth, if we entertain even the possibility of true knowledge, then the actual world must be knowable (potentially, at least) in every aspect. Knowledge must remain possible, always.

Whatever is infinite is inconceivable, in the same sense that an uncaused effect is inconceivable. For truth to remain possible, the world must exist in constant accordance with the first principles of reason--these indeed must also be the principles of the world, of being. All that is (all that, as it were, be's) or can be must conform to these principles for true knowledge to be possible. Since infinity does not conform to the first principles, the real world cannot be infinite in magnitude (calculated, for example, in miles), in multitude (calculated, for example, in sub-atomic particles), or in age (calculated, for example, in years).

The world, therefore, cannot have existed forever--Thomas is mistaken in his proposition that its beginning in time is a question of faith. Its age cannot be infinite, nor can it have

come into existence uncaused. These dual conclusions about the whole world are deducible from the first principles of reason, justified in terms of being by the Correspondence Theory of Truth. It follows then that at some specific point in time in the past, specifically the beginning of time, the world was caused to come into existence. And it is that First Cause that Thomas calls God.

The question that now, necessarily, arises is what caused God? But we cannot proceed to postulate a cause of the First Cause, for that would entail an infinite regress of causes--which in turn would confront us again with an inconceivable state of affairs: an actually infinite multitude. Yet by the identical logic which dictates that the world of being cannot abide an actual infinite, it follows that God himself cannot be infinite either. Just as predication about and within an infinite world would be absurd,⁵ so too is predication of an infinite God. Still, as we have seen, an infinite God must be premised as First Cause for knowledge and predication of the finite world to be possible.

⁵ For instance, the proposition "The world is X years old" could coexist with its contradictory, "The world is not X years old"--for this is what the attribution of infinitude comes to. And when contradictions can coexist, predication becomes absurd.

The only alternative, therefore, that does not undermine knowledge, that does not unmake the Correspondence Theory of Truth, the only alternative that does not involve intellectual nihilism, is that an infinite uncaused God did indeed, in the beginning, cause the finite world of being.

And yet the ramifications of an infinite uncaused God are indeed profound. As Robert Hoopes points out, "Throughout the fourteenth century increasing emphasis is laid upon God's infinity, from which philosophers can deduce nothing simply because they are finite" (88). Yet it was not an analysis such as the present one that led to such a theological resignation but rather desire to raise God above human cogitation:

It is as though a groundswell of anxiety develops, a fear that piety and faith are doomed unless God be "skied" beyond reach, beyond comprehension. And the arbitrary, inscrutable Deity worshipped at Genenva is not far off. (ibid.)

What I am arguing here is that the decision that God should be "skied" beyond human comprehension need not be characterized as "a groundswell of anxiety"; rather, is the direct result of an analysis of the first principles of being. The reason is that, as we have seen, there can be no correspondence--which is the prerequisite for truth--between infinity and our finite intellects. Thus whatever "is" infinite is also inconceivable,

unknowable, unpredicable. It follows logically from the first principles of reason that we cannot aspire to true knowledge of God by rational means. For instance, to predicate omniscience of an infinite God becomes a non-predication: even as the infinite age⁶ of God reconciles "X years" and "Not-X years," so too his infinitude reconciles omniscience and non-omniscience. His necessary infinitude, in fact, stands to reconcile all contradictions--which renders predication meaningless. If the proposition "God is omniscient" does not rule out the proposition "God is not omniscient," what meaning remains in the predication? At the very moment we acknowledge the necessity of God's infinitude, we remove Him from the realm of rational thought and language. If we predicate of Him existence as First Cause, "existence" must be understood here in a metaphorical sense. For to exist is to be; and whatever

6 Whether or not God can properly be said to possess an age, given the idea of His eternality, is an interesting question. In their 1981 article "Eternity," Stump and Kretzmann argue that a concept such as "simultaneity" must be reconsidered in light of Einstein's discoveries about the relativity of time. Their point is that while we perceive the French Revolution and the lunar landing as successive events, the two are simultaneous from the point of view of eternity--and, by implication, from God's point of view. But this argument cuts both ways. From our temporal point of view, God would therefore seem to have an age: infinite age. And since the temporal point of view is also the point of view from which the predication occurs, God can be said to possess at least a "relative age."

is, in the literal sense of the word, is in accordance with the principles of being and the first principles of natural reason. Whatever is is not infinite.

We have, in other words, removed God from the domain of logical being. Yet we have done so by demonstrating that the world is unknowable without Him. Without God's presence as the First Cause, the world could not have come into existence: the principle of Causality precludes an uncaused effect. Nor can the world have existed from eternity--which Thomas suggests--for the attribution of infinite age, as we have seen, violates the first principles of reason. Since these principles must correspond to the principles of being in order for truth to be possible, the suggestion that a thing can be infinite in any respect renders that "thing" outside the domain of being. And whatever is outside the domain of being, whatever is not and cannot be, ceases to be predicable. Where predication cannot hold, rational knowledge is absurd. Given, then, that rational knowledge of the world is possible and meaningful, the world must conform to the principles of finite being--which are also the principles of reason. Since, however, an infinite presence is required as First Cause to account for the world's existence, we must conclude that rational knowledge of that

First Cause is meaningless and absurd. Since we cannot ascribe being to God, divine predication is rendered absurd.

Thomas, in fact, offers a curious disclaimer about the relationship of reason to God. He asserts that our rational knowledge of God can be one of two kinds, either negative or analogical. The former kind he addresses early on in the Summa Theologica:

Now because we cannot know what God is, but rather what He is not, we have no means for considering how God is, but rather how He is not. . . . Now it can be shown how God is not, by removing from Him whatever does not befit Him--viz., composition, motion, and the like. (1a. Q3. Art.1)

The initial logic that led Thomas to speak of God in terms of negation is concerned with the mutual identity of His essence and existence (1a. Q3. Art.4), and with the lack of a logical genus and differentia by which to define Him (1a. Q3. Art.5). Yet Thomas's premise that we can negate such predicables as composition, motion, etc. from God's essence presupposes that God belongs within the domain of being. For what has Thomas done here except to invoke the principles of Contradiction and Excluded Middle as he rules out mutually exclusive attributes from the divine essence? His argument is one of reductio ad absurdum, whereby the denial of a proposition serves as an

affirmation of its contradictory. He denies "composition" and affirms "non-composition" or "simplicity." Of course, this is a valid method of reasoning within the scope of being. But in our previous discussion we have removed God from the scope of being in order to justify our rational knowledge of the world. Thomas's careful procession of divine attributes, argued from logical negations of secular attributes, including God's perfection, His incorporeality, His immutability, as well as His simplicity, rests upon the fallacious attribution of being itself to God.

Thomas's second kind of knowledge of God, knowledge by analogy, would seem at first glance more consistent with a God divorced from being by the correspondence theory of truth. In his article, "Analogy In Theology," Frederick Ferre summarizes the problem faced by all Christian theologians in this regard:

Christian theology inherits, from its Scripture and from Hellenistic philosophy, traits generating a perplexity that some have thought can be solved only by appeal to analogy. As derived from Scripture, this perplexity is based on the *prima facie* conflict between repeated Biblical warnings that God is wholly incommensurable with his creation and vivid Biblical imagery depicting things divine combined with fairly explicit statements on the Deity's purposes, emotions, and characteristic modes of behavior. On Hellenistic assumptions, the Highest Being is taken to be entirely simple, immutable, and thus essentially beyond our fragmentary concepts but, at the same

time, to be the supreme source of all intelligibility and, consequently, the one supremely knowable reality. (Ferre 94)

These "apparently incompatible axioms" (ibid.) to which Christian theology finds itself committed lead theologians to "deny that their statements attributing properties to God can properly be understood univocally" (ibid.). This is clearly Thomas's own position when he asserts:

God, however, as considered in Himself, is altogether one and simple, yet our intellect knows Him according to diverse conceptions because it cannot see Him as He is in Himself. Nevertheless, although it understands Him under diverse conceptions, it yet knows that absolutely one and the same reality corresponds to its conceptions. Therefore the plurality of the predicate and the subject represents the plurality of the idea; and the intellect represents the unity by composition. (ST 1a. Q13. Art.12)

Yet it is not mere analogy that Thomas is driving at here, but proportionality. As Ferre points out, Thomas's methodology may be represented as a mathematical proportion: God's qualities / God's nature = creature's qualities / creature's nature (Ferre 94). In thus scaling God's essence, even indirectly, to human comprehension, Thomas once again places God squarely within the domain of being. Although man's reason may not be able to fathom the attributes of God as they really are, nevertheless

the attributes continue to abide by the first principles of reason: i.e., the attributes are whatever they are, and the attributes may not contradict each other.

What Thomas has failed to recognize, therefore, is that the very notion of an "infinite being" is a contradiction in terms. It is necessary to postulate an act of creation by an Infinite Presence, a First Cause, but to predicate anything of that First Cause, apart from his presence in the beginning, is rationally absurd. Or, in still more paradoxical terms: at the moment that God created the world, He did not exist.

Given the sequence of deduction I've sketched, then, the Thomistic doctrine that God is a God of reason must rely upon an act of blind faith. And it is this act of blind faith that Richard Hooker will adopt in his defense of the English Church against the puritans. The circularity of Hooker's argument arises because his premise that God is a God of reason, upon which much of his defense rests, is simply not corroborated by a strict rational investigation of the First Cause.

CHAPTER II: HOOKER'S GOD OF REASON

Like Saint Thomas, Hooker prefaces his remarks about God with an elegant disclaimer:

Dangerous it were for the feeble braine of man to wade farre into the doings of the most High, whome although to knowe be life, and joy to make mention his name: yet our soundest knowledge is to know that we know him not as in deed he is, neither can we know him: and our safest eloquence concerning him is our silence, when we confesse without confession that his glory is inexplicable, his greatnes above our capacitie and reach. He is above, and we upon earth, therefore it behoveth our wordes to be warie and fewe. (1.2.2)

It would seem from this passage that Hooker is determined to steer clear of divine predication, yet he follows immediately with a predication of God's "verie Oneness, and meere unitie,

having nothing but it selfe in it selfe, and not consisting (as all things do besides God) of many things" (1.2.2). This is a reiteration of the Thomistic approach of knowledge by negation, of knowing Him by knowing what He is not. Like Thomas, Hooker fails in his reductio ad absurdum in that, by his rationale, he has placed God once again within the domain of being.

That point is crucial, for it is on the issue of the lex aeterna that much of his argument ultimately stands. But the idea of a lex aeterna itself rests upon the premise of a God of reason, as opposed to a God of volition. As Lee Gibbs notes in his Introduction to Book I of the Laws:

It is therefore not surprising to find Hooker formally and explicitly rejecting the voluntarist and nominalist emphasis on God's will at the expense of God's reason. . . . For Hooker, as for Thomas, law is grounded on reason (aliquid rationis); the divine will always acts following the divine reason, and all law has its origin in an ultimate law sustained by the divine will because it is rational. (Gibbs 23)

God's will, according to Hooker, is limited in the sense that it is tied to His divine reason, the same reason that sustains the rationality of the universe. This is an idea to which a puritan would have objected, for it would seem to undermine, at least by implication, God's omnipotence. The puritan would

have God's will unlimited, even by reason; it is divine will, from the puritan perspective, rather than divine reason, which sustains the universe as rational, for God could at any moment "unwill" the rationality of the universe. Hooker's position, on the contrary, his "First Law Eternal," would seem to imply that God cannot do that which is contrary to reason or being. But Hooker would contend, I think, that to limit God to that which is conceivable, to that which can be, is not to limit him at all. For example, if God were to decide to create a unicorn, He could. Nothing prevents Him from taking that which is possible, or potential, and making it real, or actual. Yet God cannot make a sentient stone, which by definition is self-contradictory. For as we have seen, a sentient stone is not a thing--since we use the term "thing" to designate a being of some kind. And a sentient stone is non-being: it is not and cannot be. If a sentient stone is not a thing, if it is literally no thing, then to limit God by nothing is to keep intact his omnipotence. Even an omnipotent God, according to Hooker, must observe the principles of being, which are themselves the principles of natural reason, or else undo the entire world He has created.

Thus Hooker, by the identification of God's will with His reason, does not in fact denigrate either one. What God wills,

is. But He wills in accordance with the principles of reason: the same principles which underlie divine reason, which is the "stay" of natural reason and of being itself.

The centrality of the idea of a rational God to Hooker's case would be hard to overstate. The lex aeterna is a law of rationality--the very word "law," for Hooker, implies reason--and, as D'Entreves notes:

It is from the very definition of law that Hooker takes up his position. His definition of law echoes almost word for word the definition of Thomas Aquinas. Will and command are not to him the constituent elements of law. There is a close connexion between law and reason: law is, as Aquinas had said, aliquid rationis. This idea has far-reaching theological and philosophical implications. Through the definition of law, the idea of reason is introduced into the very concept of God's nature; and it is the principle of reason which in turn helps to bridge the gulf between man's limitation and God's infinity. (118)

We have examined in the first chapter the rational legitimacy of the introduction of reason into "the very concept of God's nature." Thus when Hooker follows Thomas in his affirmation of a God of reason, when he rejects the volitional God of Calvin, his choice rests not upon reason but upon faith. Hooker's early declaration, "They erre therefore who thinke that of the will of God to do this or that, there is no reason besides his will" (1.2.5), must thus be construed as strategic. Although

Hooker readily concedes that God's reason for doing things may elude us, he does not doubt that the reason exists. He quotes scripture for his conviction in this regard, citing a passage from Saint Paul's letter to the Ephesians in which Paul refers to God as "him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph. 1.11). Hooker contends that

whatsoever is done with counsell or wise
resolution, hath of necessitie some reason why it
should be done, albeit that reason be to us in
some things so secret, that it forceth the wit of
man to stand . . . amazed thereat. . . . (1.2.5)

For Hooker, Paul's emphasis upon the presence of "counsell" in God's works is a sure indication that nothing God does is arbitrary--that reason and law govern even His actions. And if reason and law govern God's actions, these, in turn, can be extrapolated from creation by the exercise of human reason.

The notion that in his rational activities man might be able extract reverberations of a lex aeterna and thus discern God's will, would--as we shall see--have been lost upon a Calvinist. That rational investigation of the world is a productive and God-sanctioned function of the mind of man is a special expression of the epistemological optimism characteristic not only of Roman Catholicism, but also of the more conservative faction of the English Church, whose cause

Hooker argued. Conformism, in this respect, stands upon what Herschel Baker has termed "the axiom of knowledge":

It was the conviction that an essentially rational god, who created and sustains the universe for His own benevolent ends, is the legitimate object of man's supreme knowledge, and that this knowledge, attained through the discourse of reason and confirmed by revelation, constitutes his ultimate well-being. (Wars 4)

Hooker's defense relies heavily upon this belief that man's natural state is one of continuous intellection, of the rational searching-out of the world in which he dwells; it is as a rational creature that man fulfills the function for which he was created, and insofar as he fulfills that function he comes to please his Creator, as Hooker states clearly in Book I: "Good doth followe unto all things, by observing the course of their nature, and on the contrary side evill by not observing it . . . only man's observation of the lawe of his nature is Righteousnes . . ." (1.9.1). It is a theme Hooker will return to again and again, as he does in in the second book, when he speaks of man's obligations in things indifferent (that is, things neither explicitly commanded nor proscribed by scripture):

Nor let any man thinke, that following the judgement of naturall discretion in such cases, we

can have no assurance that we please God. For to the author and God of our nature, how shall any operation proceeding in naturall sort be in that respect unacceptable? (2.4.5)

An Aristotlean-Scholastic teleology is at work here, namely that the end, or final cause, of a thing determines its created form, and that the end must therefore be in accord with the will of the Creator. Hooker, naturally, would add that human reason must be supplemented by divine revelation, that salvation cannot, by definition, be achieved through rational processes alone. Still, he reserves a high place for the role of reason: he affirms the "axiom of knowledge."

But the Thomistic-conformist "axiom of knowledge" stood in direct contrast with the Calvinism upon which Hooker's puritan opponents rested their case. For Calvin's doctrine of post-lapsarian depravity included a denial of the spiritual efficacy of human reason:

after the heavenly image was obliterated in him, he was not the only one to suffer this punishment--that, in place of wisdom, virtue, holiness, truth, and justice, with which adornments he had been clad, there came forth the most filthy plagues, blindness, impotence, impurity, vanity, and injustice--but he also entangled and immersed his offspring in the same miseries. (Institutes 2.1.5)

Such pessimism, in effect, would have undercut Hooker's argument before it ever got started. And in light of what we have seen about the relationship between God and reason, that pessimism cannot be construed as less rational than Hooker's optimism. Thus, no matter how cogently reasoned Hooker's defense of the English Church, no matter how well his propositions cohered, once his antagonists countered with the spiritual inadequacy of the human intellect, they could not be persuaded. This provided the puritan apologists with their great "out"--if logic failed them, they could always fall back upon a denigration of man's intellect, especially as it was manifest in human authority. Hooker paraphrases Cartwright on this score, whose contention is "that argumentes taken from the authoritie of men may . . . be of some force in humaine sciences . . . But in matters divine it is still maintayned stiflie, that they have no manner force at all" (2.7.4).

Small wonder that this position should exasperate Hooker, for it is logically invulnerable. Even if Hooker chided his foes with their own uses of logic--"they never use reason so willinglie as to disgrace reason" (3.8.4)--the observation of an apparent contradiction in their reasoning need not worry them. For once logic itself has been rendered moot, logical contradictions cease to invalidate an argument. Their reply to

such critiques, as exemplified by their mentor Calvin, becomes predictable. On the one hand, Calvin could assert the utility of reason in this world:

But if the Lord has willed that we be helped in physics, dialectic, mathematics, and other like disciplines, by the work and ministry of the ungodly, let us use this assistance. . . . But lest anyone think a man truly blessed when he is credited with possessing great power to comprehend truth under the elements of this world, we should at once add that all this capacity to understand, with the understanding that follows upon it, is an unstable and transitory thing in God's sight, when a solid foundation of truth does not underlie it. (Institutes 2.2.16)

But while Calvin acknowledges the secular utility of reason, as manifest in the collective wisdom of the past, he is quick to assert reason's limitations:

Human reason, therefore, neither approaches, nor strives toward, nor even takes a straight aim at, this truth: to understand who the true God is or what sort of God he wishes to be toward us. (2.2.18)

This kind of argument, ultimately no more dogmatic than Hooker's, serves not only to dismiss the entire edifice of Hooker's defense in Laws, it also extricates the Calvinist from whatever minor chagrin he derives from the fact that on a day-to-day secular basis, classical logic seems to work. In

stressing the unbridgeable schism between human reason and divine will, his argument is rendered all but invincible.

It is indeed Calvin's contention that God does what He does simply because it is His will to do so; he holds exactly what Hooker denies: "They erre therefore who thinke that of the will of God to do this or that, there is no reason besides his will" (1.2.5). If, as Calvin suggests, there can be no necessary reason that underlies the divine will, then it follows that the human intellect is proud and foolish in seeking to discover the rationale behind God's workings. What makes this point so critical is that the divergence of the respective world-views of Calvin and Hooker hangs upon their disagreement on this issue. From Calvin's point of view, the premise that God acts without a cause except His will to act leads to the conclusion that human efforts to formulate a rational ethics based upon natural law are futile; and since reason cannot deliver a code of conduct in accordance with God's will, what remains is the revealed word of God, the Bible, which must stand as the sole criterion in determining moral actions of men.

But before we examine in depth the issues of natural law and scriptural authority, we must pause to sketch in the more

immediate details of the controversy in which Hooker himself was embroiled.

Peter Lake's recent study of the Admonition Controversy, Anglicans And Puritans?, provides a useful point of departure for a consideration of the issues to which Hooker addresses himself in the Lawes. What Lake's meticulously researched book demonstrates is that the general lines of the debate were drawn well before Hooker himself entered the fray. Among Hooker's predecessors in the defense of the status quo of the English Church were Richard Cosin, Matthew Sutcliffe, and Richard Bancroft, as well as Hooker's own patron John Whitgift (Lake 8). From the 1570s, these men engaged in a bitter exchange of books and pamphlets with several puritan reformers, the most prominent of whom were Thomas Cartwright, Walter Travers, and of course "Martin Marprelate" (ibid. 9-10). Hooker, in effect, put an end to the exchange in 1593 when he weighed in with the first four books of his Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie.

Prior to Hooker, then, the characteristics of the debate had acquired a certain familiarity among the principals, who, as Lake notes, "were university educated divines who accepted the standards of argument and proof used in the universities for academic disputation" (14). This is significant in that

the very word "puritan" had acquired, centuries before Freud, connotations of narrow-mindedness and contempt for learning. But as Lake demonstrates, the puritan movement was in fact represented by erudite men who engaged their Anglican opponents in intricate and, at times, tediously logical polemic:

The whole protestant enterprise was based on the application of the authority of scripture directly to contemporary doctrinal and moral issues. Syllogisms were formed on the basis of what were taken to be unimpeachably scriptural premises and thus general rules and injunctions were teased out of the bare word of God. This combined with a university culture which was dominated by formal disputation, placed logic at the centre of any dispute about the meaning of scripture. (15)

The debate was not, therefore, a contest between a conformist camp committed to rational dispute and a puritan camp caught up in self-righteous ranting. Reason itself was not on trial. But the limits of reason, the proper spheres in which reason might operate, were very much at issue between the two sides. Since, as Lake indicates, both sides relied heavily upon their distinct "scriptural premises," exegetical practices must, of necessity, come to be a focus of the argument--and as we shall see, Hooker devotes considerable energy to dispatching several of Cartwright's readings of key biblical passages. Still, the

very notion that "general rules and injunctions" could be "teased out of the bare word of God" presupposes an appeal to rational decorum to which conformist and puritan alike would consent.

Aside from their exegetical practices, a central point of contention between conformist and puritan concerned a conflict of methodologies. The controversy at the Temple between Hooker and Travers, out of which Hooker's Laws grew, pitted not only the Protestantism of Canterbury against the Protestantism of Geneva but also the more traditional scholastic formulations of Hooker against the probable Ramism of Travers. And, as Lee Gibbs points out, "Travers was the more popular preacher, drawing overflow audiences and attracting the most able of the young lawyers making up the congregation" (Gibbs "Theology" 177). In accounting for this, Gibbs indicates that the dispute pertained

not only to the difference in theology between an Elizabethan Anglican and an Elizabethan Puritan but also to the difference between the baroque, ornate, or metaphorical style of one orator trained in Aristotelian logic and Ciceronian rhetoric on the one hand, and the plain style of another influenced by the logic of Peter Ramus (1515-1572) and the rhetoric of Ramus . . . on the other. (178)

The Ramist connection is integral to an understanding of the puritan mindset. Although it attracted some notice in Oxford, where Hooker was educated at Corpus Christi College, the real hotbed for English Ramism was Cambridge, where Travers earned his degree from Trinity College. As Collinson points out:

Of a rough-and-ready list of clergy and schoolmasters who have left some evidence of puritan convictions and who were active in the twenty years 1570-1590, no less than two hundred and twenty-eight were in residence at Cambridge University at some time between 1565 and 1575. . .
(127)

And it was at Trinity College at Cambridge in the 1560's, not coincidentally, that Travers first became involved in the puritan agitations of his colleague Thomas Cartwright, who had been made a fellow there in 1562 ("Theology" 181). Thus, while Hooker's curriculum at Oxford was derived almost wholly from classical antiquity, consisting of the trivium of Latin grammar, rhetoric and logic, and then the quadrivium of music, astronomy, arithmetic, and geometry, Travers' Ramist-influenced education at Cambridge reflected a persistent mistrust of the traditional medieval arts curriculum ("Theology" 179-181).

The appeal of Ramism for the Cambridge puritans must have been strong. The theological underpinning of Catholicism,

which was by no means discarded by the English Church, is, as we have seen, grounded upon the logical methodology of Aristotle, as synthesized by Thomas. (And Thomas, of course, is Hooker's own philosophical mentor, as Munz documents in The Place of Hooker in the History of Thought.) What Ramus undertook, in France in the 1540's, was a general reform and simplification of Aristotelian logic and rhetoric, "defining dialectic or logic as 'the art of discoursing well'" ("Theology" 182). As Meyrick Carre notes, "the ruling motive of logical study had . . . become rhetorical" (203). This is in direct contrast to the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition in which logic is a first and foremost a tool for the discovery of truth. Thomas Wilson's influential 1551 logic textbook, The Rule of Reason, "the first logic that Englishmen could read in their native language" (Howell 12), betrayed a not very subtle Ramist slant. According to Carre, Wilson

dwells on the profitable virtue of training in formal logic. It is true that he recommends the study on the ground that it advances the knowledge of God and all his heavenly works, but its chief value is in worldly affairs. Its purpose was forensic rather than philosophical. (ibid.)

The implication of emphasizing the rhetorical aspect of logic, at the expense of the more laborious formal aspect, was that

"the true use of the art was now persuasion and eloquence" (ibid. 204). Specifically, Ramism advocates "the movement of thought from what is vague to what is more precise" (206). Hence deductive reasoning, which undertakes the clarification of more general ideas, was more appealing to Ramists than inductive, or the movement from the particular to the general; to the Ramist mind, the "collection of instances" upon which an induction is based "merely illustrates a rule already known, it cannot prove it" (ibid.). But an over-reliance upon deductive reasoning has its own pitfalls; for deduction is easier to divorce from truth than induction, which entails claims about the state of the real world. Deduction from false premises can be as formally sound as from true premises--and so gaining acceptance of one's premises, rather than observing and inferring from actual evidence, becomes for the Ramist the key movement in debate. What follows from this way of thinking is a weakening, in principle, of rational inquiry in the face of irreconcilable premises. The "reality check" has become secondary. As Carre comments, "The immense popularity of Ramist logic shows once more the withdrawal of interest from fundamental questions" (ibid.).

Hooker, as one might anticipate, takes a rather dim view of Ramism, which he terms "Ramystry" (1.6.4). His dismissal of it is brief and to the point:

So as following the rules and precepts thereof, we may define it to be, an Art which teacheth the way of speedie discourse, and restrayneth the minde of man that it may not waxe over wise. (1.6.5)

That the puritans should embrace Ramist logic is at least partially accounted for by the fact that it is a metaphorical reflection of their own agenda: just as Ramus sought to rid logic of the clutter of Aristotle, the puritans sought to rid the Christian religion of the clutter of Catholicism. Even if, as Walter Ong maintains, Ramism's "central element is a logic or dialectic which cannot be taken very seriously by any competent logician," it is important to bear in mind that as a method of propogandizing the new logic served the manifest religious and political ends of the reformers.⁷ Once again, it was Travers, not Hooker, who drew the larger crowds.

But perhaps an even deeper attraction between puritanism and Ramism is delineated by Wilbur S. Howell:

⁷ Although Ong's book is, technically, removed from the present discussion, the parallel he draws between Ramism and the onset of humanism in the Renaissance is an intriguing corollary to the puritan liberation of secular knowledge from its theological anchor. Much of the same material is covered in Howell's book as well (see below).

The Catholic world of the Middle Ages was bound together by a system of agreements that made it necessary for a speaker to proceed only so far as to link a given proposal to those agreements. Thus the old rhetoric of the commonplaces--the old rhetoric which defined invention less as the discovery of something new than as the recalling of the proper element among the old--was admirably suited to such a stable world. But the Reformation brought many of the old agreements under debate, and created many doubts where only a few had existed before. Ramus, himself a convert to Protestantism, simplified scholastic logic and traditional rhetoric in order to sharpen the tools which an age of controversy had to use. (10-11)

Thus it is apt that Hooker, whose ties to "the Catholic world of the Middle Ages" are considerable, should present his case by means of the traditional scholastic logic and rhetoric; and it is equally apt that Travers, by contrast, should have adopted the shortcuts and direct-appeal of Ramism.

This distinction holds true, in general, of the exchanges between conformists and puritans in the decade before Hooker's Lawes. If it is the case, however, that many of the arguments on both sides had been laid out in painfully logical discourse prior to Hooker, his contribution is nevertheless far from unoriginal. Though his work is directed, first and foremost, against the arguments of presbyterian cause, Hooker seeks at least secondarily "to sort out a conformist case much afflicted by its own internal contradictions" (Lake 145). What

was lacking before Hooker was a ground-level accounting, a rational foundation, a corpus of epistemological principles from which further attacks could be met. Hooker's intention, thus, is not only to forward but simultaneously to stabilize the conformist case. As Lake comments:

. . . Hooker took previous conformist writing as his starting point and attempted to resolve the contradictions which had afflicted the work of his predecessors. It is unsurprising therefore that his work included a good number of the arguments and polemical ploys developed by previous conformist authors. But Hooker was doing a good deal more than merely reshuffling the pack of available polemical options. He was integrating them into a new synthesis at the centre of which stood a distinctive and novel vision of what English protestant religion was or rather ought to be. (146)

And, for Hooker, what the "English protestant religion . . . ought to be" is decidedly not presbyterian. He is acquainted with, and understands, the prebyterian agenda; from its roots in the doctrine of Saint Augustine to its potential ramifications in Genevan Calvinism, he has thought through his opponents' case. And, as Lake points out, he thinks it fundamentally flawed:

. . . he saw presbyterianism as the product of a central epistemological lapse or mistake about the right relations between reason and scripture, and his whole book was designed to set out the

necessary epistemological structure within which the full extent of this mistake could be realized and right relations between reason, scripture, and public authority in church and state restored.
(147)

Hooker, it is crucial to remember, never sees his own task as futile. As he seeks to set down a "necessary epistemological structure," he invokes, with confidence, the universality of rational relations and common sense. He believes that if he can demonstrate to his opponents the error of their thinking, they will lay down their demands for reform and acquiesce to the rightful authority of the established church. It is this overriding appeal to human reason, of course, that has come to characterize Hooker's work.

But before he is able to address the particulars of the presbyterian case, there is housecleaning to be done. Namely, Hooker must sort through and solve those contradictions which seem to plague the conformist platform. Upon a set of basic principles, in other words, he must ground the superstructure of Anglicanism.

For those basic principles, Hooker returns to Thomas and the concept of natural law.

Natural law is the rational base on which Hooker grounds his epic defense of the English Church. Among the eight books

which comprise the Laws, none is more central to his overall intention than Book I, which Hooker devotes to a concise explication of natural law. And as Peter Munz has demonstrated in his study, The Place of Richard Hooker in the History of Thought, Hooker's concept of natural law is derived from Saint Thomas--who himself had synthesized the "good life" set forth by Aristotle with the doctrinal requisites of Christianity into a rational system for a good Christian life. The lineage is rather telling. Aristotle conceived a universe of being that was scaled in fundamental accordance with human reason: whatever was was knowable. Thomas then reworked Aristotle's equation into a proportion: things were knowable in proportion to the mode of their being. Hence the finite world was knowable, in a univocal sense, to the finite reason of man. Divine being, on the other hand, was not knowable as it truly was, for it was not finite. Univocal knowledge could not be had of God; only analogical knowledge could be had, according to Thomas. Divinity was knowable in proportion; the divine attributes of God were to him as human attributes were to man. Though he qualified his system with this notion of analogical knowledge, Thomas, like Aristotle, still set out to scale the whole spectrum of being in rational human terms. Although the

footing could get a bit treacherous, logic operated in heaven as well as earth.

Having embraced natural law, therefore, Hooker must also regard logic as a legitimate, indeed decisive, tool for the consideration of things natural and supernatural. His task thus is to justify, on a strictly logical basis, the doctrines and practices of the Church of England in the final years of the sixteenth century. His position was especially precarious for he had to contend with antagonistic elements from both sides--from Catholic recusants, who still argued for a reconciliation of the wayward Church of England with the true Church of Rome, and also from the presbyterians, who pushed to widen the breach with Rome to an even greater degree. And, as Lake notes:

. . . the arguments used by the presbyterians to justify their reformation of church government exactly paralleled the arguments employed by all protestants to justify the breach with Rome and the reformation of doctrine. (74)

Despite the clear logical inconvenience of the circumstances, Hooker asserts: "There is as yet no way knowne how to dispute or to determine of things disputed without the use of naturall reason" (3.8.17). The whole of his Laws comprises a logical progression; the particular ancillary issues taken up in Books

II through VIII, beginning with scriptural authority, continuing through the rites of English worship and ecclesiastical polity, and culminating in the relationship of the church to the English monarchy, are grounded upon the premises of natural law set down in Book I. To reiterate, however, it is the thesis of this dissertation that Hooker's case is necessarily circular. His conclusions are inherent in his epistemological method, and, ironically enough, his rationalist theology is itself no more defensible than the voluntarist theology of his antagonists.

That Hooker has left himself open to anti-rationalist assaults is clear from the earliest lines of Book I. For he opens his discussion of natural law with the observation that, "All things that are have some operation not violent or casual. Neither doth any thing ever begin to exercise the same without some forconceaved ende for which it worketh" (1.2.1). Hooker aligns himself, here, at the very outset of his defense, with the teleology of Thomas and thus with the ancient tradition of natural law rooted to a considerable degree in the philosophy of Aristotle. Hooker's debt to Aristotle and Thomas is well documented, starting with the anonymous puritan response to Laves entitled A Christian Letter:

Now in all your bookes, although we finde manie good things, many truethes and fine pointes bravelie handled, yet in all your discourse, for the most parte, Aristotle the patriarche of Philosophers (with divers other humane writers) and the ingenuous schoolmen, almost in all pointes have some finger . . . (CL Chapt. 20)

For the author(s) of the Letter, Hooker's reliance upon the scholastic tradition was scandalous because the Church of Rome relied upon that same tradition, and because one of the key movements of the Reformation was to redirect men's studies away from the schoolmen and towards the scriptures themselves. The letter quotes Luther's judgement in this regard: "That schoole divinitie hath banished from us the true and sincere divinitie. And again . . . All Aristotle unto divinitie is darkenes unto light" (ibid.).⁸

Apart from the immediate polemics of Hooker's own time, however, the Aristotelian-Thomistic connection has been the focal point of much modern scholarship. As cited earlier, D'Entreves' 1939 study, Medieval Contributions to Political Thought, noted the centrality of Thomas's definition of law to Hooker's case (116-118). For D'Entreves, the concept of law

⁸ Hooker's response to these allegations, inscribed in the margins of his copy of the Letter, is rather scornful: "If Aristotle and the Schoolmen be such perilous creatures, you must needs think your self an happie man whome God hath so fairely blest from too much knowledg in them."

that Hooker derived from Thomas underlay the coherency of Hooker's position--if law itself is not conceived as aliquid rationis then Hooker's defense collapses. Referring to D'Entreves' work as "a landmark in the development of the modern study of Hooker," W. D. J. Cargill Thompson, in his lengthy essay "The Philosopher of the Politic Society," summarizes the argument:

In d'Entreves' view, Hooker's contribution to the development of the concept of natural law--which he regarded as the most important aspect of Hooker's political theory--could be properly understood only if it was seen not as the precursor of the "rationalist" theories of the seventeenth century but rather as the culmination of the medieval scholastic tradition of natural law 'as a part of the eternal order which God has imposed upon Creation.' D'Entreves was by no means the first scholar to emphasize Hooker's debt to Aquinas and medieval scholasticism, but he was the first to analyze it in detail and to make it the key to his interpretation of Hooker. (Cargill Thompson 7-8)

Cargill Thompson proceeds to argue for the overall coherence of Hooker's thought,⁹ against the case put forth by Peter Munz who, in his 1952 book The Place of Hooker In the History of Thought, had contended that Hooker's position is tragically flawed. According to Munz, the complementarity of reason and

⁹ See the afterword of this dissertation for other recent judgements on the issue of Hooker's overall coherence.

faith presented in Thomas's synthesis is incompatible with Hooker's advocacy of royal supremacy. Thus Hooker's argument, ". . . shades off, imperceptibly to start with, but irresistibly under the duress and pressure of real life and political struggle" towards an over-confident view of human nature that culminates in Erastianism (8). The details of Munz's argument, and of Cargill Thompson's riposte, are not directly pertinent to the present discussion. But Munz's study is notable in that it is the most exhaustive accounting of Hooker's debt to Saint Thomas. Munz maintains that Hooker's Thomistic worldview is the natural counter to the Augustinianism evinced by the puritans:

Hooker must in fact have recognized in Puritanism the traditional tenets of medieval Augustinianism philosophy. For an answer to it he naturally went to St. Thomas Aquinas. Hooker did not expressly explain that that was what he did. But if one compares the general character of medieval Augustinian philosophy with the character of Puritanism as seen by Hooker; and Hooker's answer with the fundamental principles of Thomistic philosophy, then one will clearly recognize what was at the root of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity. (46)

Munz proceeds to argue that the controversy between conformist and puritan is a working out, within the theological-political arena of the sixteenth century, of the ancient breach between

Aristotle and Plato. The two lines of the debate can, in turn, be understood as Aristotle by way of Thomas versus Plato by way of Augustine. For the English puritan, as for Augustine, philosophy remains subservient to theology--in much the same way that, for Plato, the experiential world remains dependent upon an ideal world which represents a higher reality, a truer truth. The puritans adopted an Augustinian world view that "denied the efficacy of second causes and made both man and nature completely dependent on divine grace by not allowing them any kind of either causal or rational efficacy" (47). Behind this image of reality stood "the view that human nature was depraved . . . that faith therefore had to supplant reason and that divine law substituted for natural law" (ibid.).

Aristotle, and in turn Thomas, "rejected the scepticism that was latent in Plato" (48). Aristotle rejected Plato's notion of a world in flux, dependent upon a ideal eternal realm for its existence. For him:

there is a certain stability in the world which can therefore be known by man through the senses. And hence things have efficacy in the state in which we know them, i.e. in this world. Knowledge need not be explained through a world of exterior intelligibles but through an active intellect which produces the intelligible. Thomism was due to the purely philosophical decision that Aristotle was right and Plato was wrong. (ibid.)

According to Munz, if Thomas's choice of Aristotle over Plato was a "purely philosophical decision," Hooker's selection of Thomas was more practical. It was necessary for Hooker to preserve "the autonomy and efficacy of natural reason in those spheres of life where the irrational authority of faith can only do more harm than good" (ibid.). From Hooker's point of view, the autonomy of reason must be preserved in order to justify natural law, as discerned by human reason, as a moral directive, and also to contend against the puritan ideal of sola scriptura. The autonomy of reason, moreover, must be an adumbration of the fundamentally rational nature of God himself, and of the lex aeterna by which he governs his own actions. In the exercise of his human reason, thus, man comes to reflect his created essence, his rational self, and please the God in whose image he was made:

reason, because it is the imprint of the divine countenance of man, can and ought to be relied upon. . . . By following reason man is ultimately following God and exercising his rational autonomy only apparently. He is really only co-operating with God, for nothing can be done or can happen except by virtue of God's efficacy, or without the perpetual aid and concurrence of the supreme cause of all things. (53-54)

This sentiment is echoed by Baker in his book The Wars of Truth. According to Baker, Hooker borrowed and refined "the

medieval synthesis" of Thomas in which "the great forces of pagan and Christian, secular and religious, philosophical and theological thought were brought into some sort of equilibrium" (5). It is an equilibrium whose stabilizing force is the concept of a rational God who does not sit apart but involves Himself in creation and who guides it in accordance with a lex aeterna; it is the lex which in turn reverberates through that creation and infuses its derivatives--divine, natural and human laws--with reason. The commitment to intellection in such a world passes from a practical act to a sacramental duty:

. . . every element in man's experience--all the data of sensation from which he derives both the 'images' and the capacity for drawing inferences from them which constitute natural knowledge--becomes an object of cognition that in its hierarchical upward sweep leads ultimately to God. Thus every fact takes on, as it were, a sacramental function of attesting the glory of God. The book of nature, as the Renaissance delighted to call it, provided a ready approach to the comprehension of a theocratic universe--for man's 'proper form' in Aristotelian terms is the 'intellectual principle'--and the inference is clear that man's 'ultimate beatitude' consists in exploiting his highest function of intellection to arrive at a knowledge of God. (5)

Hooker's entire world-view, in other words, hinges upon the presumption that through his natural intellectual activities,

through the practice of "right reason," man aligns himself with God. But this presumption, of course, entails that God Himself is rational.

Like Munz and Baker, Lee Gibbs dwells on the centrality of Hooker's Thomism in his Introduction to Book I:

Hooker adopts as his own the Thomist dictum that gratia non tollit naturam, sed perfecit, a doctrine which has far-reaching polemical implications with respect to the more pessimistic stance of his disciplinarian opponents on the relation of reason to faith, on the disabilities of fallen human nature, and on the necessity of the political state and its laws. (15)

The puritan stress upon reason as a instrument of fallen human nature, blind to the will of an infinite and inscrutable God, carried an implicit opposition of the spheres of nature and grace, reason and faith, government and religion--and whenever the spheres seemed to come into conflict, the puritan would always fall back upon the latter at the expense of the former. For Hooker, on the contrary, the spheres were not opposed but complementary. Grace complemented nature, faith reason, and religion government. If nature was followed, grace would come (super)naturally; if reason was right reason, faith would evolve; if government was just, religion would encourage obedience:

Behind [Hooker's] exposition of all these interrelated themes there can be discerned a conjunctive view of the relation between grace and nature, between reason and will, and between Scripture and reason that is closer to the position of Thomas than to the more disjunctive perspective of his Calvinist antagonist. (22)

For Hooker the law of reason is the process whereby the rational mind is able to discern what is good and direct the will accordingly. What is good, in turn, is described as what God intended--namely, the movement towards full actuality of the God-created essence of the individual:

Beginning in chapter 5 [of Book I] with the Aristotelian and Thomist principle that all things have an appetite toward perfection that manifests itself as the striving to fully actualize their potentiality, and arguing that God is the ultimate source of all goodness and perfection, Hooker concludes that it is God towards whom all things are striving and attempting, each in its own way, to imitate. (32)

Hence, within the created nature of every individual thing there exists a God-sanctioned good towards which that thing should strive. For human beings, that good is identifiable through the exercise of reason; natural law, as the manifestation of reason, therefore, is God-sanctioned. Natural law is "natural" only inasmuch as it reflects essential structure, as opposed to the accidental constraints of

conscious external agents. Among all of God's creatures, man alone is able to shun his "forconceaved ende" (1.2.1) by the exercise of his free will. He cannot choose evil in and of itself, but he can choose a lesser good over a greater good, which is Hooker's definition of doing evil (1.7.7); thus a man may fail to fulfill God's will--which is always the greatest good. God cannot compell men to choose their greatest good, for He would have to unmake their human nature, strip them of their free will, and this would be to alter the natural law of their material existence. He can incline them towards His divine will, create in them a yearning for righteousness, the greatest good, but he cannot coerce them without undoing His own creation.

But to return to those first lines of the Laws quoted earlier: "All things that are have some operation not violent or casuall. Neither doth any thing ever begin to exercise the same without some forconceaved ende for which it worketh" (1.2.1). Aside from a subtle nod towards the Aristotelian-Thomist tradition out of which his defense is wrought, Hooker strikes a second keynote here. He establishes the arena in which he means to contend. For he has begun with an observation about the world--namely, that all things operate towards an end--which is then used as the basis from which to

infer his conclusions. The inductive method is therefore invoked, and it is taken as axiomatic: human reason itself has been implicitly affirmed. Since Hooker intends to draw out from these opening observations his system of correct actions in accordance with God's eternal will, he runs head on into Calvin's point about the secular limitations of human reason--not to mention the Ramist predisposition, discussed earlier, against inductive reasoning. It's not difficult to imagine the author of A Christian Letter setting down the Laws after the first couple of chapters, shaking his head, and then muttering to himself about Hooker's darkened mind. From his perspective, Hooker had indeed set out on a familiar path into error; he had, in effect, already missed the boat.

Against reason, the puritan falls back upon the Calvinist doctrine of grace, by which the darkened minds of the elect alone are permitted access to the truth--which to the puritan way of thinking lies only in the scriptures. Apart from His revealed word, nothing can be known of God. Not that Hooker lacked biblical knowledge; even his antagonists would have allowed him that. What he lacked, in their view, was the divine gift of grace which led to enlightened readings. Though grace was presented to all men, only the elect were destined to accept the gift, which in turn enabled them to be saved.

It's a classically circular argument: if you were one of the elect, you would see the correctness of their position; thus if you tried to show them their errors, you could not be one of the elect--which meant that you had refused the gift of grace, that your mind remained darkened. The puritan's idiosyncratic interpretations of scripture, cited by Hooker at various junctures in his work (2.1.3 to 2.4.7, for instance), therefore made sense to themselves and not to him precisely because they were the elect. And he, evidently, was not.

Hooker, conversely, argues that because the lex aeterna is itself a rational law, the exercise of reason, even post-lapsarian reason, cannot constitute an offense to God. If indeed the lex infuses creation, then it acts as the divine sanction for natural law. To follow nature is ultimately to follow God. Guided by the lex, the law of nature functions as "the stay of the whole world" (1.3.2). In what is undoubtedly the most quoted passage in the entire Laws, Hooker's prose rised to a crescendo as he declares the absolute necessity for such a guiding principle:

Now if nature should intermit her course, and leave altogether, though it were but for a while, the observation of her own lawes: if those principall and mother elements of the world, whereof all things in this lower world are made, should loose the qualities which now they have, if

the frame of that heavenly arch erected over our heads should loosen and dissolve itself: if celestial spheres should forget their wonted motions and irregular volubilitie, turne themselves any way as it might happen: if the prince of the lightes of heaven which now as a Giant doth runne his unwearied course, should as it were through a languishing faintnes begin to stand and to rest himselfe: if the Moone should wander from her beaten way, the times and seasons of the yeare blend themselves by disordered and confused mixture, the winds breath out their last gaspe, the cloudes yeeld no rayne, the earth be defeated of heavenly influence, the fruites of the earth pine away as children at the withered breasts of their mother no longer able to yeeld them reliefe, what would become of man himselfe, whom these things now do all serve? See we not plainly that obedience of creatures unto the lawe of nature is the stay of the whole world? (1.3.2)

The intellectual progression is evident: without the law of nature, man and his rational world would perish; without the lex aeterna, the law of nature would cease. Thus it is the lex which directly sponsors the rational order of things, which breathes reason into the contingencies of creation, which upholds the world above the chaotic nihil out of which it was wrought. The moment of creation itself becomes the first rational act, the carving out of the principles of being and of reason. Subsequently, man comes to crown that creation by the scrupulous use of rational thought.

That is the basis of Hooker's position, the crux of his defense of the church as established, and it may very well be

ontologically valid--except, as we have seen, it is erected on faith rather than reason. Reason, on the contrary, would seem to support Calvin's contention of an impassible breach between the Creator and His creation. The presence of God, literally, in the beginning, can be deduced syllogistically out of the first principles of being. But that same logic, and those same principles, remove Him from the compass of rational knowledge and predication. It is ironic that Calvin, who rested so much of his argument upon non-rational methodology (i.e. the recognition of religious truths only by the grace-inspired elect) and upon anti-rational dogma (i.e. the hopelessly darkened faculties of post-lapsarian man) should in the end have his position bolstered by a scrupulous examination of the first principles of reason.

On the other hand, this is a ruinous blow to Hooker's argument--not to his position, necessarily, but to his argument. That distinction is critical to bear in mind. It is not Hooker's position which is the main focus of the present investigation, but rather his justification of that position. And it is to that end that Hooker comes to regard tradition as a yardstick of moral rectitude: "The most certaine token of evident goodnes is, if the generall perswasion of all men do so account it" (1.8.3). His rationale is that "the generall

and perpetuall voyce of men is as the sentence of God him selfe" (ibid.). Tradition, in other words, is a direct manifestation of the law of reason, which itself exists in conformity with the lex aeterna. As Gibbs summarizes,

By observing the axioms of this law that, in spite of the devastating consequences of sin can still be discovered by reason apart from special divine revelation, human beings put themselves in conformity with that eternal law by which God had determined from the beginning within himself to govern all things. (Gibbs 38)

Hence, an epistemology which sunders the lex aeterna from the law of reason undermines the whole of Hooker's case. No longer can man's exercise of his natural capacity for logical thought be taken as an acting out of the intentions of a rational God; rather, God's intentions are demonstrably unknowable, even, perhaps, altogether alien to the rational order of the world.

Stripped of this essential link between the lex aeterna and the law of reason, as represented in the traditions handed down through generations of past times, Hooker's "generall and perpetuall voyce of men" ceases to bind Christians who are determined to find the will of God expressly in the holy scriptures.

CHAPTER III: REASON AGAINST FAITH

The exact relationship between scripture and reason, or more generally between faith and reason, was a very bitterly contested issue in Hooker's time and comes to occupy a considerable measure of his attention in the Laws. As with so much else in Hooker, what seems from our own perspective a purely intellectual quarrel could not, towards the end of the sixteenth century, be divorced from the dominant political and religious tensions of the age. Indeed, in the decades which culminated in civil war, it might be argued that this issue more than any other served to delineate English politics. Puritans for the most part tended to regard faith and reason as discrete: faith, unlearned and unearned, paved the way for eternal salvation; reason was merely a tool for secular

survival. It is hardly surprising then that the puritans were ready to abandon reason--which had been darkened by original sin to begin with--wherever it was perceived to come into conflict with the revealed word of God. This contrasted with the conformist perspective, for which Hooker is the chief apologist, which regarded faith and reason as complementary. True Faith and right reason could never contradict each other. Wherever the two seemed at odds, the fault lay in misinterpretation. Right reason, if indeed it were right reason, complemented true faith, and the latter supplemented the former. Right reason, moreover, was required in order to appreciate the congruence between the Book of Holy Writ and the Book of Nature--since both had been authored by God Himself.

This idea, of course, did not begin with Hooker or with the conformist-puritan disputes of Reformation. It is at least as ancient as the famous opening of the fourth Gospel:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. (John 1.1-3)

It would not be an overstatement to hold that this passage has exercised as much influence in the formulation of the

Christian theological synthesis as any other passage in the entire Bible. For "the Word" comes from the Greek Logos, which means not only "word" but also "reason." With that in mind, John's account of the world's creation becomes much more than a poetic recapitulation of the first sentence of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." When John specifically associates the creative efficacy of God's Word as reason, the ramifications are profound and inevitable: acceptance of the Bible as the literal revelation of God becomes also an affirmation of the rational origins of the world.

Yet that fact, in and of itself, is but a prelude to the gordian knot of reason and faith which emerges from John's account a scant eleven lines later:

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,
(and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only
begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.
(John 1.14)

The flesh into which the Word was made was Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, the Son of the Father by means of the Holy Ghost. With this brief passage we are delivered into the fundamental mystery of Christian doctrine. And it is here that we are most apt to see the delicate interplay of

faith and reason which lies at the heart of that tradition. As the Incarnation of the Word, Christ stands as the worldly embodiment of reason itself, of the Logos, yet he must also participate in what is perhaps the most non-rational relationship in all of Church teaching. For the doctrine of the Trinity defies reason, defies even the first principles of Identity, Contradiction, Excluded Middle, and Causality. To accept on faith the doctrine of the Holy Trinity amounts to a resignation of the rational process, of the Logos within each of us, so as to adore three individuals who are also one and the same.

As we saw in Chapter I, the notion that the First Cause of the world lies beyond the domain of rational thought and language is entirely compatible with the first principles of being--the notion is indeed inevitable after careful scrutiny of those principles. And since the principles of being are also the principles of natural reason, we are left with a Logos whose existence flouts its very essence. God cannot be because the correspondence theory of truth removes Him from being. Yet in the person of Christ, His "being" underlies the edifice of Christianity. The idea of the Incarnation, in other words, calls upon the believer to surrender up the logos

within himself in order to embrace the Logos who was made flesh.

Coincidentally, the paradoxes involved in the Incarnation of the Word seem to support much of what Calvin argued. In Book I of the Institutes he assumes his typically anti-rationalistic posture toward the possibility of divine knowledge:

And here again we ought to observe that we are called to a knowledge of God: not that knowledge which, content with empty speculation, merely flits in the brain, but that which will be sound and fruitful if we duly perceive it, and if it takes root in the heart. (1.5.9)

The knowledge of God to which Calvin believes all men are "called" is the mere fact of His existence as Creator--Calvin by no means comprehends what we have seen to be the full implications of the attribution of existence to God. Yet he has intuited the finite human intellect's non-conformity with infinitude, remarking about God earlier that "his divineness far escapes all human perception" (1.5.1), and again later,

The Scriptural teaching concerning God's infinite and spiritual essence ought to be enough, not only to banish popular delusions, but also to refute the subtleties of secular philosophy. (1.13.1)

It is upon this fundamental point that the path of Christian thought begins invariably to fork. Calvin understands the impenetrability of the divine essence, as manifest in the doctrine of the Trinity, as a mandate to refer speculations from the intellect to the heart, which is the only place where knowledge of God "takes root." From here springs the entire anti-rationalistic thrust of Calvinist thought. This is in contrast with the rationalistic scholasticism of Thomas, which acknowledges the insoluble mystery of the mutual identities of Father, Son, and Spirit and yet does not therefore surrender up theology to the heart. Rather, the intellect falls back upon faith in order to bridge what it cannot wade through. Once this bridge of faith has been forged, the intellect simply crosses over it and continues the process of rational investigation into contingent issues.

Thus faith constitutes an essential noetic element within the divergent epistemological systems of Calvin and Hooker. Yet it would be a mistake to conclude that faith fulfills the same, or even similar, functions for both of them. For Calvin, faith serves to focus the intellect of man upon the revealed word of God, for it is faith that declares the Bible authentic and that commands the mind's acquiescence before the proof of scripture. It is faith by which a man is justified and through

which the gates of salvation are opened before him. Faith in and of itself cannot save a man. Without the unwarranted and unfathomable gift of divine grace, faith is impotent: faith can point a man towards righteousness, but grace alone can inspire him to act righteously. We come to Christ's commandments through faith; we fulfill them through grace.

For Hooker, faith is not as consistent a concept. If Calvin came to regard faith as rational surrender, Hooker realized that faith and reason served mutually to actuate one another. The correspondence theory of truth, which Hooker inherited from Aristotle and Thomas, itself may be viewed as an act of faith--an act which joins the first principles of reason to the principles of being, which upholds the eternal correspondence between what the mind can conceive and what can be. It is an act of faith we invoke the moment we start to think rationally: and we must distinguish this kind of faith from the supernatural faith involved in accepting scripture as the revelation of God. Indeed, the faith implied in the correspondence theory of truth we should more properly term natural faith because it justifies the natural reason of man: it is the link between the human mind and the physical world, the only response to the solipsistic doubt written into the hearts of all men. That the world is as we conceive it to be,

that it is governed by the first principles of reason that also govern our intellects--these propositions cannot be demonstrated rationally. For the very demonstration would necessarily invoke those same principles; thus the means of demonstration would also be the objects of demonstration, and the reasoning would necessarily be circular.

It comes as no great surprise, therefore, that amidst the puritan-conformist controversy in England, the parameters of reason and faith should become focal points of debate. To what extent, if at all, reason penetrated divinity might well be construed as the metaphysical question of the Reformation. For the answer, as we shall see, will influence the relative weights allotted natural law and scripture in determining the proper conduct of Christian life. But of course the parameters of reason and faith are themselves contingent on the dogmatic assertion of a God of reason or a God of volition--as discussed in Chapter II.

But to understand the polemics of reason versus faith in the Reformation, it is necessary to return to Augustine, whose views were to exercise a profound influence on both Luther and Calvin. For Augustine, the project of reason is to discern ultimate truth. Yet our senses reveal to us a world that is in flux, a world in which truths seem to escape us in the moment

taken to grasp them. So Augustine, following Plato, decided that an Absolute Truth must exist beyond the domain of our human experience, a Truth of Being that acts to stabilize the world of becoming in which we dwell. But where Plato sets the idea of the Good, Augustine sets God. Religious truth must first be accepted on faith, but afterwards it comes to render meaningful whatever knowledge one acquires through reason. As Robert Hoopes summarizes: "our ideas about truth point to the existence of Absolute Truth" (65). Reflection, then, serves to underscore the necessity of a validating absolute:

Ideas about immutable truths presuppose the existence of those truths; how else shall we account for their presence in mutable minds? To doubt, he [Augustine] argues, is to confirm the existence of truth. To doubt the truth of any statement or judgement is to affirm that Truth is. Indeed, how should we ever come to question our perceptions of the external world if there did not exist, besides those perceptions and relations, certain standards of truth which we assume whenever we measure and examine them? (ibid.)

The very fact that we are unsatisfied by the transient truths of experience points to the imprint of lasting Truth upon us. Yet that lasting Truth is not accesible by an act of direct intellection. What remains is faith: "Unless the mind submits to the discipline commanded by the Reality that is presumed to exist in faith, thought will grasp not the substance but the

shadow" (Carre 40). According to Augustine, human reason, in its primal quest for lasting knowledge, cannot be neutral with respect to the dogmatic truths of religion. That is why reason must at last acquiesce to the authority of the church. But the acquiescence itself will be understood in retrospect as truly reasonable:

Authority opens the door. If a man enters, leaves doubt behind, and follows the rules of good living, he will become receptive to teaching and will at length come to see how eminently reasonable those doctrines are that he obeyed before he understood them. Fruitful reasoning on points of faith requires a purification of the heart; truth is not to be grasped apart from charity. (ibid.)

The first step towards rational understanding of the world and of the self is rational resignation; despairing the existence of lasting truth, reason gives way to faith. But that faith comes in the end to rehabilitate reason. Rehabilitated, reason then recognizes that what seemed an act of resignation was in fact a necessary step towards rational understanding of the world. If Augustine raises faith above reason, he does not do so to disparage reason:

The soul's knowledge is superior to the body's knowledge in the sense that wisdom is superior to science. Knowledge of things possesses its own

value, and though Augustine subordinates it, he does not reject it. (Hoopes 67)

Carre neatly summarizes the Augustinian view: "Faith does not rest upon a philosophical inquiry but it is aided by it. . . . the Christian thinker . . . must start with faith and proceed to intelligible faith" (55).

Reason occupies an even more elevated role in the thought of Saint Thomas. Rather than rely upon supernatural faith for its actualization, human reason exercises a sovereignty within the domain proper to it. That sovereignty is in turn mirrored by the sovereignty of faith within its proper domain. The natural question of which one should be followed in case of a conflict is answered by Thomas's insistence that right reason and true faith can never come into conflict. If they seem to, the fault lies in the interpretive processes of the person. As Hoopes explains:

The result of his [Thomas's] labors is not demonstration of the identity of reason and faith . . . but their ultimate coalescence. The basis for that position resides in Aquinas' steady insistence upon the knowledge of God as man's proper end. To that end there is a way of faith and a way of reason. Because the articles of faith are based upon the word of God and not upon human reason, they are not susceptible to rational demonstration. Conversely, philosophical truth cannot be proved by the word of God, for

philosophy is based upon reason and not upon revelation. (76)

That truth which is arrived at by right reason can never be contradicted by a scriptural reference. Likewise scripture, properly interpreted, can never violate the first principles of reason. For example, if reason has rightly delivered to us the truth of the earth's orbit around the sun, and not vice-versa, then we must interpret as metaphorical the passage in Joshua (10:13) in which the sun is halted in the sky. Literal interpretation of this passage would contradict our rational knowledge of the world--which, Thomas argues, cannot happen. Thus it is reason that determines where a literal reading will hold and, conversely, where a metaphorical reading is required: "It is unreasonable that there should be a conflict between reason and faith" (ibid.).

Moreover, according to Saint Thomas, there cannot be two different kinds of truth, as the Averroists held, but rather two different ways of knowing. Experiential nature is simply a reflection of the rational nature of God, an indirect revelation by contrast with the direct revelation of scripture. The two modes of revelation must complement one another since they spring from the same Source. Hoopes

characterizes the essential difference between Augustine and Thomas in brief. For Thomas,

the world is a world of intelligible forms, understandable because it was understood before it existed. (In Augustine the second half of the proposition seems to work in reverse; he seems to suggest . . . that because the world I behold is susceptible, however partially, to my mind's comprehension, it must be the product of a mind: ergo God exists.) (77)

For Augustine, the world's intelligibility demonstrates the necessary participation of a Sustaining Principle. For Thomas, on the contrary, the world's intelligibility demonstrates that the Sustaining Principle must exist in an intelligible, if somewhat removed, mode: "The failure of man to grasp every element of divine truth points not to the irrationality of divine, but to the weakness of human, reason" (85).

The earliest attack upon the Thomistic synthesis of faith and reason comes from Duns Scotus (1266-1308) whose "a priori assumption of reason's impotence in search for divine truth" (86) effectively sunders theology from philosophy. Central to Scotus's doctrine is the belief that to conceive of God as a rational being is somehow to limit Him, to deny Him his full omnipotence. The stress in Scotus falls not upon God's reason but upon His will. The world is intelligible not because God,

like man, is fundamentally rational. Rather it is intelligible because up until now God has willed it to be so. He could undo the rationality of the world tomorrow if He so desired: "a rational God is a God whose infinity and omnipotence have been seriously curtailed. God's will acts of its own accord" (87).

The emergence of Scotus's volitional God sounds a keynote of what will become a Reformation theme:

Destined to reappear in Luther, Calvin, and others, Scotus' doctrine of the supremacy of the divine will elevates God above moral and physical law. Unrestricted by ideas of right and wrong, God issues the commandments, and the commandments are right and obligatory because they are commanded. In short, God does what he pleases, and thus creates right and wrong. (ibid.)

The concept of a volitional God also emerges as a theme in the theology of William of Ockham (c.1285-1349), although his nominalist attack upon the Thomistic synthesis is deeper rooted than Scotus's. This is, of course, not the occasion to explore at length the nominalist-realist dispute except to say that Ockham and his followers came to theological conclusions similar in certain respects to those of Scotus:

The Ockhamists, it will be remembered, had taught that the truths of faith pertained to a sphere where human reason is incompetent. The system of beliefs revealed in the Scriptures must be accepted on divine authority. The philosophical

basis of his position was the view that the will has primacy over the intellect, and when applied to theology it maintained that God's will is above reason. His will for men is absolute and we cannot by searching understand it. (Carre 193)

The intellectual thrust of the Reformation can be deduced from the notion of a volitional God. If human reason cannot come to discern, even analogically, God's intentions, then natural law emerges as a creation, not a discovery, of rational men; the rights and wrongs of natural law, in other words, cease to bear God's imprimatur. Although these may be useful as social regulators, God's intentions for human beings are available from one source only: his scriptural revelation. The Bible alone directs us in a way that is pleasing to God. Hence the Bible alone should determine the practice of religion, and, by implication, the conduct of everyday life. Faith in revealed scriptures, thus, usurps the role of right reason. And reason, in turn, is relegated to a mere secular tool.

Hence, Luther is moved to denounce Aristotle's Ethics--a guide to human morality erected on the dictates of reason--as "worse than any other book, being the direct opposite of God's grace, and the Christian virtues" (cited by Faulkner 54). As for Thomas's synthesis of Aristotelianism and Christianity, Luther remarks: "I cannot avoid believing that the Evil One

introduced the study of Aristotle. The whole Aristotle is to theology as darkness is to light" (ibid.).

The fracture of Roman Catholicism is at hand. The stress upon human reason's limitations carries not only a mistrust of individual reason as moral guide but also of collective reason as a manifestation of God's will. The preservation of the status quo simply on the grounds that it represents the wisdom of the past is no longer viable. Where once Thomas had spoken of the "implicit faith" (ST 2ae. Q2. Art.5) of simple-minded people in what wiser people believe--thus affirming the necessity of church councils--Calvin will now counter:

Furthermore, to state truly and frankly the real fact of the matter, this fiction [implicit faith] not only buries but utterly destroys true faith. Is this what believing means--to understand nothing, provided only that you submit your feeling obediently to the church? Faith rests not on ignorance but on knowledge. And this is, indeed, knowledge not only of God but of the divine will. We do not obtain salvation either because we are prepared to embrace as true whatever the church has prescribed, or because we turn over to it the task of inquiring and knowing. But we do so when we know that God is our merciful Father, because of reconciliation effected through Christ, and that Christ has been given to us as righteousness, sanctification, and life. By this knowledge, I say, not by submission of our feeling, do we obtain entry into the Kingdom of Heaven. (Institutes 3.2.2)

Faith, for Calvin, is always supernatural faith, saving faith: faith in God the Father and in the sacrificial efficacy of His crucified son. Such a faith implies no secular corollary, no natural faith. Nor would supernatural faith ever concern itself with something as mundane, as this-worldly, as mere confidence in the traditional teachings of the church. The epistemological basis of Catholicism has, in effect, been undermined.

And this was the concept of faith, elevated above reason, adopted by the puritan cause in England. Reason, from the puritan perspective, had been corrupted by the Fall and was of no use of spiritual matters. The puritan theologian William Perkins states:

Original sin is nothing else but a disorder of evil disposition in all the faculties and inclinations of men, whereby they are carried inordinately against the law of God. (cited by Davies 55)

If indeed "all the faculties and inclinations of men" lead us "against the law of God," the proposition that natural law, as discovered by human reason, might represent God's will for men is doomed. If our rational capacities cannot direct us in a way that is pleasing to God, what remains except his revealed word with which to frame our actions? And, clearly, to order

every aspect one's life in accordance with scripture requires a powerful act of faith.

That act of faith must be powerful enough, from the point of view of the puritan, to override if necessary what is known by reason. W. Speed Hill summarizes their position:

At issue, then, was whether ordinary human experience was worthy of men's trust. Men like Travers and Cartwright held that it was not: true belief was "contrary to all sense and human understanding." (182)

As Lee Gibbs notes in his introduction to Book I of the Laws, Hooker was taken to task by Travers for his alleged reversal of this hierarchy. Hooker had claimed in a his Sermon of the Certaintie and Perpetuitie of Faith in the Elect that "the assurance of what we beleewe by the word, is not so certeyne as of that we perceyve by sense" (Gibbs 12). Travers' response in his Supplication made to the Privy Counsel is to the point: "I . . . taught the doctrine otherwise, namely, the assurance of faith to be greater, which assureth of thinges both above and contrary to all sense and humane understanding" (200).

In this brief passage from Travers' response to Hooker's sermon, we can readily glimpse his reliance upon Calvin--in contradistinction to Hooker's reliance upon Thomas. As Egil

Grislis notes in his commentary on the passage (100), Travers' sentiment echoes Calvin in the Institutes:

When we call faith "knowledge" we do not mean comprehension of the sort that is commonly concerned with those things which fall under human sense perception. For faith is so far above sense that man's mind has to go beyond and rise above itself in order to attain it. Even where the mind has attained, it does not comprehend what it feels. But while it is persuaded of what it does not grasp, by the very certainty of its persuasion it understands more than if it perceived anything human by its own capacity. (3.2.14)

As Grislis indicates, it is likely Hooker would have conceded Calvin's formulation. But Hooker would have added, following Thomas, that the question of whether to trust faith or reason when the two conflict is a non-issue. True faith and right reason could never contradict one another. When Hooker states that "the assurance of that we beleeve by the word, is not so certeyne as of that we pereyve by sense" he is not seeking to establish a hierarchy but rather simply commenting upon human nature: we set trust in our senses before we ever come to develop supernatural faith, and therefore that which is demonstrable to reason is usually given credence more readily than than which is not. Belief comes easier, and stands more firmly, when rational evidence is brought forth to reinforce

it. It is only when reason cannot render judgement one way or another that faith must be blind.

Thus faith is by no means slighted in Hooker's vision. Throughout the Laws, he builds not only upon the act of natural faith implicit in the correspondence theory of truth but also upon a supernatural faith congruent to that of the puritans, as manifest in his acceptance of the scriptures as divine and as necessary for salvation. He answers his antagonists with reason, yes, but again and again he cites scripture to counter puritan citations. If the latent distinction between the two modes of faith, natural and supernatural, is lost upon Hooker--he would never view his preference for Aristotle and Thomas against Plato and Scotus as an act of faith--it is only because he believes that reason (as actuated by natural faith) consistently validates the messages of supernatural faith, the same messages that we find in the Bible.

As a indication of this, he notes that the greatest pagan philosophers have sometimes been led to seemingly Christian insights, though they obviously drew these insights from reason rather than revelation. Referring to these philosophers as "meere naturall men," Hooker asserts that they "have attayned to knowe, not onely that there is a God, but also

what power, force, wisdom, and other properties that God hath, and how all things depend on him" (1.8.7). Using this knowledge, which is gotten through the processes of natural reason, unsupplemented by revelation, the pagan philosophers have derived "axiomes and lawes naturall concerning our dutie" to "the principall cause" of the world. It is with respect to their teachings of the great honor owed by all men to "the principall cause" that the congruence between these philosophers and Christ himself emerges. Hooker cites in this regard the two foremost pagan figures, Plato ("That in all thinges we goe about his ayde, is by prayer to be craved") and Aristotle ("That he cannot have sufficient honour done unto him, but the utmost of that we can doe to honour him we must") in order to highlight the parallels with scripture:

which is in effect the same that we read, Thou shalt love the Lorde thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soule, and with all thy minde. Which lawe our Savior doth terme the First and the great Commaundment. (1.8.7)

If Christ's first commandment is accessible by the light of unaided reason, so too his second commandment, the Golden Rule, which is the cornerstone of Christian ethics, can be derived from the first:

the like naturall inducement hath brought men to knowe, that it is their dutie no lesse to love others then themselves. For seeing those things which are equall, must needes all have one measure; if I cannot but wish to receive all good, even as much at every mans hande as any man can wish unto his owne soule: how should I looke to have any part of my desire herein satisfied, unless my selfe be carefull to satisfie the like desire, which is undoubtedly in other men, we all being of one, and the same nature? . . . My desire therefore to be loved of my equals in nature as much as possible may be, imposeth upon me a naturall dutie of bearing to them-ward fully the like affection. (ibid.)

To do unto others as you would have them do unto you, for Hooker, comes to be a matter of common sense--quite apart from the scriptural exhortations of the New Testament. The fact that Christ's message should parallel such a wholly reasonable standard of human conduct serves further to bind up faith and reason rather than oppose them, as Calvin's voluntarism tended to do. Calvin embodies the pessimistic strain of Protestant theology, which hinges on

the Okhamist distinction between faith and reason, and it was this distinction, coupled with the belief that man's spiritual faculties are utterly vitiated by the Fall, which led the early Reformers to insist that human reason was entirely inadequate to deal with matters of faith and that the only authority to be followed was that of Scripture. (Cargill Thompson 30)

Since Calvin is convinced that in his corrupt fallen state man is incapable of moral reasoning, he argues that man must seek direct scriptural sanction for his every act. Hooker, on the contrary, is led by his Thomistic belief in the conformity of right reason and divine revelation to conclude: "Wherefore the naturall measure wherby to judge our doings, is the sentence of reason, determining and setting downe what is good to be done" (1.8.8).

Given this, a high reverence for traditional ways becomes implicit in Hooker's very definition of natural law:

And the lawe of reason or humaine nature is that which men by discourse of naturall reason have rightly found out themselves to be all for ever bound unto in their actions. (ibid.)

Hooker's defense, thus, becomes virtually inevitable. For if natural reason, unsupplemented scripturally, is able through discourse to solve what is right to do, or in other words what is moral, then tradition represents a valid repository of that discourse. Tradition therefore carries a moral imperative to which every individual must resign himself, unless he is able to find clear and present rational or scriptural evidence to justify his resistance. Even where the immediate logic of the

particular custom eludes him, he should nevertheless exercise vigilant restraint:

That which wisdom did first begin and hath bene with good men longe continewed, challengeth allowance of them that succede, although it plead for it selfe nothinge. That which is new, if it promise not much, doth feare condemnation before triall; till triall, no man doth acquite or trust it, what good soever it pretend and promise. So that in this kinde there are fewe thinges knowne to be good, till such time as they grow to be ancient. (5.7.3)

If tradition were ever discovered to contradict either reason or scripture, Hooker concedes, it would be necessary to abandon the particular tradition. Yet he does not believe that such contradictions are often found. For if in fact tradition represents the collective wisdom of reasonable men, there should be a constant conformity between their reason and ours, and also between the voice of God as expressed in their reason and the voice of God as expressed in His revelation.

Hooker follows Thomas's lead in these matters. Speaking of positive human laws, which after all represent the traditional wisdom of rational men, Thomas holds them to be just and morally binding only insofar as they reflect right reason:

Now in human affairs a thing is said to be just from being right, according to the rule of reason. But the first rule of reason is the law of nature Consequently, every human law has just so much of the nature of law as it is derived from the law of nature. But if in any point it departs from the law of nature, it is no longer a law but a perversion of law. (ST 2a. Q95. Art. 2)

The question might naturally be put to either Hooker or Thomas of how a positive human law, as a remnant of traditional wisdom and a product of rational men, might ever come to deviate from the law of nature--when both the law of reason and the law of nature (not to mention divine law) are supposed to emanate from the lex aeterna. The answer supplied by Hooker--although not directly by Thomas--is that positive human laws are framed in accordance with particular times and circumstances that are thereafter subject to change; what seemed perfectly reasonable in the past might with the passage of time come to be superfluous or even cumbersome. This leads Hooker to the familiar conformist distinction between matters of doctrine and matters of polity: only the former, according to Hooker, are crucial towards salvation and thus cannot ever be altered by men; the latter, however, he sees as indifferent to salvation, and thus can and should be altered in regard to circumstance:

The Church hath authoritie to establish for an order at one tyme, which at an other time it maie abolish, and in both doe well. But that which in doctrine the Church doth now deliver rightlie as a truth, no man will saie that it may hereafter recall and as rightlie avouch the contrarie. Lawes touchinge matter of order are changeable, by the power of the Church; articles concerninge doctrine not so. (5.8.2)

Whenever Hooker baits his puritan opponents to come up with incontrovertible rational or scriptural evidence to support their proposed changes in church polity, he presupposes that the tradition grew out of the law of reason as applied to particular circumstances. As long as those circumstances remain in effect, the tradition, as a manifestation of the law of reason, carries with it the sanction of the lex aeterna and thus of God himself. Since God cannot contradict His own counsel, Hooker denies that a tradition so grounded will ever err under the circumstances for which it was first framed.

What emerges is a definitive epistemological heirarchy, outlined by Hooker himself in Book V:

. . . what scripture doth plainlie deliver, to that the first place both of credit and obedience is due; the next whereunto is whatsoever anie man can necessarelie conclude by force of reason; after these the voice of the Church succeedeth. That which the Church by her ecclesiasticall authoritie shall probablie thinke and define to be true or good, must in congruitie of reason

overrule all other inferior judgements
whatsoever. (5.8.2)

This is one of the more crucial passages in the whole of the Lawes, for it encapsulates the rationale for much of Hooker's conservatism. The hierarchical scale of certitudes to which Hooker would refer spiritual matters constitutes an epistemological ladder, stretching at one end towards the lex aeterna, as manifest in revelation, and grounded at the other end in the cogitations of individual men. But even the image of a ladder is a bit deceptive, for the rungs of this ladder are not as determinate as Hooker lays them out. To begin with, the issue of what the scriptures "plainlie deliver" is in itself problematic. To whom is this deliverance made? To reason? No doubt, that is what Hooker intended. But for a puritan, the scriptures were not interpreted solely or even primarily by reason but by faith--a faith inspired by the divine gift of grace that could fly in the face of reason and still be true. What scripture plainly delivered to Cartwright or Travers was in some respects quite contrary to what it delivered to Whitgift or Hooker. The issue devolves, ultimately, to divergent conceptions of God: the puritans, following Augustine and Calvin, conceived a God of volition; the conformists, following Thomas and Hooker, a God of reason.

If the world is as it is simply because God wills it to be so, then scriptural truth, for the puritan, becomes whatever He inspires His elect to believe. But if God operates in conformity (even analogous conformity) with the principles of natural reason, if reason binds even the lex aeterna, then scriptural truth must itself be derived with reference to logical method. The text must be submitted to a process of observation and inference, weighing the literal sense against the symbolic (and preferring the former where it will hold) in order to arrive at the most probable meaning. And all of this sorting out must be done in light of tradition, which itself represents a compilation of rational interpretations.

Indeed, Hooker's phrasing, "what scripture doth plainlie deliver," insinuates that the entire ladder is wrought out of reason. Even the proposition of a hierarchy of epistemological reference is so clearly steeped in medieval intellection that it postulates what his antagonists would never agree to. Why bother with such mental gymnastics, a Calvinist would ask, when the truth will be plain to those who are going to be saved--especially given the fact that the intellect has itself been darkened by the fall. Hooker, in other words, has once again premised the spiritual efficacy of reason in order to frame his defense. He has presupposed that in the act of

reading the scriptures we are able rationally to distinguish what is to be taken literally from what is to be taken symbolically.

But even if a Calvinist were to grant Hooker the initial rung of his ladder, "what scripture doth plainly deliver," he would still be confronted with "whatsoever any man can necessarily conclude by force of reason." This is a principle no clear-minded Calvinist could accept when applied to matters of salvation. Though he might concede human reason occasional inklings of right and wrong--"The purpose of natural law," Calvin declares, "is to render man inexcusable" (2.2.22)--the proposition that man "by force of reason" might "necessarily conclude" what God's will was would be out of the question:

Our reason is overwhelmed by so many forms of deceptions, is subject to so many errors, dashes against so many obstacles, is caught in so many difficulties, that it is far from setting us aright. (2.2.25)

Citing the apostle Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 3:5, Calvin then adds, "he [Paul] even takes from us the ability to think how the right doing of anything can enter our minds" (ibid.).

Of course, the individualism implied in Hooker's placing the necessary conclusions of "any man" above the "voice of the church" does have a certain Calvinist ring, but where

Hooker writes "whatsoever anie man can necessarilie conclude by force of reason," a Calvinist would substitute ". . . by force of divine illumination," for it is faith, unreasoned and unquestioning, which is led by the Holy Ghost to the divine truths imbedded in scripture. In order to ferret out the true meaning of God's revealed word, the Calvinist must approach the Bible with simplicity and utter humility. To "necessarilie conclude by force of reason," in the face of a scriptural enigma, is an act of presumption.

Hooker places next in his hierarchy "the voice of the Church." But he qualifies his remark in an interesting and telling way: "That which the Church . . . shall probablie thinke and define to be true or good, must in congruitie of reason overrule all other inferior judgements whatsoever." The key word is "probablie." The implication here is that at the level of church discipline we are no longer in the realm of eternal certitudes but of probabilities. But if the church is the way to heaven, how can Hooker speak of its discipline as a mere probability? The answer comes in a distinction he draws between two Christian churches, the visible and the invisible (or mystical). And as William Haugaard notes in his commentary on 3.1.2, the distinction is not original with Hooker:

The description of the church as "the mystical body of Christ" originates in Paul's use of the analogy of the body and in early theologians who employed "mystical" to signify those made members of Christ by the rites of initiation. Because of the association with initiation and the dual reference of "body" to church and to the eucharist bread, the phrase came to emphasize the indwelling of Christ in those who became his members. Augustine identified it with the true believers, distinct from the historical institution and, in his preoccupation with predestination, with the fixed number of God's elect. The Augustinian understanding predominates in Thomas's ecclesiology. (Haugaard 1-2)

Even though "the Augustinian understanding predominates" in his ecclesiology, Thomas, characteristically, develops and limits the metaphor of the church as "body" by scrupulous analysis. He distinguishes between "the natural body of a man" and "the mystical body of the Church" on the lines that "the members of a natural body all exist together, whereas members of the mystical body do not." (ST 3a. Q8. Art.3) Thomas's point is that while a man's body must exist at one time and in one place, a mystical body need not, and thus the term "mystical body" should not be misinterpreted as a membership which is simultaneously present. On the contrary, the mystical body of the church includes those now in possession of saving grace as well as those who may possess it in the future: "So people can be classed as members of the mystical body because

of their potentiality, and not merely when they are actually in it" (ibid.). Thomas thus unites those who are saved already with those who are going to be saved within the one mystical body of the church. Since there are many professed Christians who will not be saved, the distinction between the visible church (defined by mere profession) and the mystical church (defined by potential for salvation) is implicit.

Whereas, for Thomas, membership in the mystical body of Christ implies a potentiality that can be actualized through faith and meritorious works (Hauggaard 4), Calvin comes to view the mystical church as pre-actualized, as an elect. Calvin, as we shall see later, believes that eternal life is attained not through works but through unwarranted grace, and so it follows that those predestined for heaven, or the elect, are actual members of the mystical body of the church even as they dwell upon earth:

For we have said that Holy Scripture speaks of the church in two ways. Sometimes by the term "church" it means that which is actually in God's presence, into which no persons are received but those who are children of God by grace of adoption and true members of Christ by sanctification of the Holy Spirit. Then, indeed, the church includes not only the saints presently living on earth, but all the elect from the beginning of the world. Often, however, the name "church" designates the whole multitude of men spread over the earth who profess to worship one God and Christ. (4.1.7)

For Calvin, "the saints presently living on earth" are already ticketed for salvation; nothing that happens on earth is going to alter that fact. These therefore are the elect, the actual members of the mystical body, justified before Christ by their faith alone--which indeed is not even theirs but itself a gift of divine grace.

By the Reformation, then, the much earlier concept of an "invisible church" or "mystical body" had become linked with the central Calvinist doctrine of an elect and thus also with the implicit belief in predestination. The notion that the elect on earth were joined in the mystical body of Christ with the saints who had gone before asserts a continuity, at least on the mystical-invisible level, between the Church of England and the church initiated by Christ himself through Peter. This invisible continuity was an especially critical point for the English reformers since they had broken away from the visible succession from Peter that descended to the pope. As Leonard Trinterud explains in his introduction to the writings of John Foxe:

In Foxe's work the theme of the pure primitive church was treated with great elaboration. Christianity, so the story went, had been brought to England by Joseph of Arimathea and others

directly associated with the original twelve apostles. . . . Later the Roman papacy had gained control of the English church, had debauched it, and had become a plague on the English rulers and people. But at all times in the English church some people had been found faithful. . . . All through the tumultuous sixteenth century, godly men of action, kings, officials, ordinary laymen and earnest preachers had labored to purge England of the dregs of Rome and Antichrist. (Eliz. Pur. 42)

In other words, the Roman Church, with its visible trappings, had come to dominate the visible English Church, and in turn the papal influence wrought havoc through the whole of English society. But at last, thanks to the heroic activities of the mystical elect within the visible Church of England, the Roman domination had been cast off. The only question that remained was how much or how little of the visible trappings of Roman Catholicism ought to be cast off as well. That, in essence, is the conflict between the puritans and the conformists; the former wanted to be rid of all external traces of Rome, while the latter wanted to preserve, for the sake of order, certain indifferent (at least, to them) aspects of ecclesiastical structure and ceremonial practice. The emotionalism that underlay the puritan agenda is therefore understandable--the assertion of independence carries in its wake a tide of strong emotions. Yet the very visible-invisible distinction that

helped to legitimize the break with Rome also supported the conformist case. As Trinterud notes:

Foxe himself drew . . . the conclusion the Elizabethan Settlement had called for, namely, that there was a distinction between the religion of the spirit (the invisible church) and the external religion supported by the state for the welfare of the nation (the visible church). (ibid. 45)

If in fact the invisible body of Christ comprises the elect, then those souls are going to be saved regardless. The particulars of the external form of religion, or the visible polity of the church, are not going to hinder their passage to eternal life. So went the conformist argument. The puritans countered that while polity in itself did nothing to justify a soul before God, good polity was evidence of a true church:

This world had always had two churches, God's true church and the devil's chapel nearby. The true church had seldom been visible, and had usually been small and under persecution, discernable only to those who were its members. The false church had usually been visible, powerful, pompous, wealthy, cruel and persecuting--a clerical church. Only occasionally, when godly rulers had aided it, had the true church been relieved of suffering and hardship. (ibid. 44)

The puritan agenda, then, was to rid the Church of England of its visible Roman trappings so that it might be more readily

identifiable as a true church. There was an insistence that the invisible righteousness of the English Church be made, as it were, visible by divestiture of all things Roman. The temptation to ambiguities in rhetoric, to slurring the visible and invisible, was inevitable. It was a bone of contention in the heated exchange between Hooker's own patron, Whitgift, and Cartwright:

Whitgift felt that Cartwright continually confused the church defined as a visible this-worldly institution with the invisible church of God's elect. According to Whitgift, Cartwright habitually used an exalted language of spiritual perfectionism, appropriate only to the invisible church, when he was talking about the visible church. The visible church, trapped within the structures of the history of fallen humanity, must necessarily always remain sadly imperfect and subject to change and decay. (Lake 28)

If, as Lake argues, "language normally applied to the internal process of salvation was being applied to the collective cause of national reformation" (31), then the urgency of the puritan case is heightened:

. . . the edification of Christ's spiritual body was not quite being equated with the introduction of discipline, but the two processes were being associated, even elided, and some sort of causal link was being established between them. Cartwright's rhetoric thus operated in a twilight world, caught between the visible and invisible church. It was the resulting slippage between the

two realms which allowed him to attach such golden visions of reformed purity to the discipline.
(ibid.)

The logic of the visible-invisible distinction, because it segregated essential doctrine from non-essential polity, combined with the doctrine of predestination, rendered the puritan argument moot. It was therefore necessary, rhetorically, to muddy the issues a bit in order to forward ecclesiastical reform. On the other side, we find among defenders of the established church a quest for clarification. In the second preface to his Acts and Monuments, John Foxe writes:

Now forasmuch as the true church of God goeth not lightly, alone, but is accompanied with some other church or chapel of the devil to deface and malign the same, necessary it is therefore the difference between them be seen, and the descent of the right church to be described from the apostles' time. . . . For like as is the nature of truth, so is the proper condition of the true church, that commonly none seeth it but such only as be the members and partakers thereof. And therefore they which require that God's holy church should be evident and visible to the whole world, seem to define the great synagogue of the world rather than the true spiritual church of God. (Eliz. Pur. 57-58)

Here again we see highlighted the visible-invisible, decayed-pure, false-true distinction. Foxe's intention is not merely

to establish continuity, against the Roman argument, but also to halt reform, against the puritan argument.

Likewise, the visible-invisible distinction can be found in Hooker. The latter consists of those individuals who have been justified by faith, the elect:

That Church of Christ which we properly terme his body mysticall, can be but one, neither can that one bee sensible discerned by any man, in as much as the partes thereof are some in heaven already with Christ, and the rest that are on earth (albeit their naturall persons bee visible) we doe not discerne under this propertie, whereby they are truly and infallibly of that body. (3.1.2)

Hooker recognizes the strategic mandate for clarity, and so he embarks on a familiar path of division and definition. Even though a certain number of the elect dwell among us, he says, we cannot know by mere outward signs who these people are. For even as they reside and worship on earth, they are of the "body mystical" and belong unequivocally to the invisible church. By contrast, Hooker then goes on to define the visible church:

The visible Church of Jesus Christ is therefore one, in outward profession of those thinges, which supernaturally appertaine to the very essence of Christianitie, and are necessarily required in every particular christian man. (3.1.4)

The visible church is thus distinguished, at any given moment, from the invisible church (or the "body mysticall") by a relationship not unlike the flesh to the spirit. The spirit cannot be discerned by external appearances, but the flesh can. The flesh is corruptible, but not the spirit. Yet in this life the spirit is never apart from the flesh but must dwell within. But even as the trappings of the flesh cannot halt the progress of an elected spirit, Hooker would argue, neither can the mere trappings of the visible church unmake its mystical body. The visible church encompasses all those who profess themselves Christians and who observe the outward signs of Christianity: "one Lorde," "one faith," and "one baptisme" (3.1.3). It is an earthly institution of living individuals. But among the "body mysticall" are counted not only those who are going to be saved but those who already have been saved. To hold that the visible trappings can effect the fate of the mystical body is to deny the equality of those saints who are on the earth with those who are in heaven. Yet the principal justification of the break with Rome, as we have seen, was the continuity, the unity, of the mystical body, the community of saints.

Therefore, when Hooker speaks of what the church "shall probablly thinke and define to be true or good," his reference

is to the visible church. Among the elect, Hooker argues, the polity of the visible church should be understood as a matter of convenience, not necessity; their salvation is assured by the grace-inspired intuitions which characterize participants in the invisible church. Hooker's contention is that since the elect are going to be saved regardless, all English Protestants should, for the sake of secular order and peace, adhere to the ecclesiastical judgements of the visible church. The polity of the visible church, after all, concerns itself only with matters indifferent to the salvation of the individual; it is simply a social body whose aims happen to be spiritual. Salvation, by contrast, is a matter between the individual and God Himself. The visible church functions only as conduit. Polity, of course, must once again be carefully distinguished from doctrine; while polity comprises an accretion of probabilities, doctrine is a fixed and certain body of dogmatic truths. Polity evolves with circumstances. Doctrine endures. Every visible church determines its own polity; no church can alter doctrine and remain one with Christ.

When Hooker argues that what "the Church . . . shall probablie thinke and define to be true or good, must in congruitie of reason overrule all other inferior judgements

whatsoever," he means simply that in matters of polity, where salvation is not at stake, the proper course is almost always conformity. Though the logic of a particular practice may not be apparent, it must initially have been instituted for a sound reason, and it must have been preserved for a similarly sound reason. Since it comes down to us as a tradition, we owe it reverence and obedience unless and until we can logically demonstrate its harm--and harm, in this instance, must be understood only in a secular sense. The elect have their bags ticketed. The future of their souls is not at stake. Hence, according to Hooker, there is no possible harm in the elect's adherence to the given polity of their national church--even if, in their individual judgements, that polity seemed to be in error.

Still, there was a great deal in the status quo of the English Church that was neither enjoined nor forbidden by the scriptures. For the puritan, the fact that a point of polity could not be directly derived from the word of God constituted a proof-by-omission of its evil. Here, again, Hooker counters the puritan reliance upon faith with an insistence that even the scriptures must be read and interpreted in rational terms. The greatest puritan excess was the principle of sola scriptura, the idea that scripture alone must guide man in all

of his actions, from the weightiest to the most trivial. Where man does not follow the scriptures, the puritans would argue, he sins. In Hooker's paraphrase,

. . . whatsoever the law of Christ commaundeth not, thereof Antichrist is the authour; and that whatsoever Antichrist or his adherents did in the worlde, the true professors of Christ are to undo . . . (Pref.8.6)

Thus, for the puritans, if a practice could not be ascribed directly to biblical mandate, it ought to be construed as improper in the conduct to religion. According to Horton Davies,

the Puritans argued that the Scriptures were a pattern and model for worship and the form of church government . . . its teaching was to cover all aspects of life and especially to direct life within the church, both liturgical and administrative. To ignore its teaching was merely to prove that one was not yet freed from the absurd pride and interior darkness which was the legacy of original sin and of unredeemed nature.
(51)

Tied to the dogmatic principle that fallen reason is unable to discern right from wrong, or more specifically that what seems reasonable and proper cannot be presumed to carry divine sanction, the puritans have no recourse but to frame their polity in accordance with scripture--God's direct revelation.

By contrast, the conformist apologists "argued that whatever traditions of the ancient church were not forbidden by Scripture might be retained by a Protestant national church" (ibid.). Thus the presupposition that underlies the conformist case is that human reason is able to discern right from wrong, and that the exercise of reason in matters of religion is not a presumption but a God-sanctioned activity. This intellectual optimism is predicated, as we have seen, on the notion of a rational rather than a volitional God; and it is every bit as dogmatic as its antithesis, the intellectual pessimism of the puritans, predicated upon a God of volition. There is no strictly rational reason to prefer one conception of God over the other.

As soon as the rational-volitional coin has been flipped, in other words, the rest of the coordinates of the conformist-puritan controversy get laid in. To what extent human reason is a reflection of God's will is the epistemological linchpin of both sides of the debate, conformist and puritan alike. The puritans are forced by their own logic into the sola scriptura position: for their premise that reason cannot be trusted in spiritual matters entails that it cannot be relied upon to recognize adiaphora.

The conformist-puritan clash is thus unresolvable because the presuppositions of both sides are equally dogmatic. On the one hand, for example, we find Cartwright:

To him the Bible was an "infallible book," literally "God's word," not depending for its authority on the testimony of the Church, nor to be interpreted by the reason of man, but shining in its own light. It asks from human reason not an inquiry into its claims, but an humble submission to its laws. (Hunt 49)

And on the other hand, we find Whitgift:

On the Anglican side, Whitgift answers Cartwright's assertion of the comprehensive applicability of the authority of Scripture by agreeing that "nothing ought to be tolerated in the Church as necessary unto salvation, or as an article of faith, except it be expressly contained in the Word of God, or may manifestly thereof be gathered"; but he also draws the corollary, "Yet do I deny that the Scriptures do express particularly everything that is to be done in the church." (Davies 52)

Indeed Whitgift's very phrase, "everything that is to be done in church" is comprehensive enough to be loaded. If justification is by faith alone (as asserted by Article 11 of the 39 Articles of 1571) then what is to be done cannot mean what is necessary to be done for the saving of souls but rather what is necessary to be done to preserve the present order of the church. But the puritans' point was that the

present church order need not be preserved--indeed they argued for an order reformed along the lines of the Calvin's own Church at Geneva.

And it was Whitgift, we must recall, who delineated many of the conformist arguments that Hooker would later adopt in the Lawes. As Cargill Thompson notes:

it was he [Whitgift] who first developed, in relation to the question of church government, the two concepts that lie at the heart of Hooker's own defense of the Elizabethan church: first, the concept that there is a fundamental distinction to be drawn between matters of faith, which are essential to salvation and which are clearly laid down in Scripture, and "external" or "outward" matters of religion, which are "not commanded or prohibited in scripture" and are therefore to be regarded as "things indifferent"; and second, its corollary, that each individual church has the right to determine its own external forms of worship and church government "according to the state of times, places, and persons." (16)

But the very concept of "things indifferent," or adiaphora, is itself contingent upon the capacity of reason to discriminate between what is necessary for salvation and what is not. Hence, the conformist view of human reason as a reflection, however imperfect, of a rational God has already been invoked.

By contrast, as Munz points out,

the puritan appeal to Scripture was not an appeal for men to use their reason to decipher the word

of God, but a direct affirmation of the fact that man had to be "inspired" in order to know anything at all. The process whereby Puritans interpreted the bible was called "inspiration"; and the laws for human conduct thus arrived at were not laws derived by men but laws grounded on the word of God. To find rules for conduct is therefore, according to Puritanism, a matter of pure inspiration and not of reason. (Place of Hooker 31)

The puritans deny reason even a role as interpreter of scripture. It is interpreted by inner illumination, a gift of grace, which permits the justified soul an inner conviction of the true sense of a given passage. This in turn permits the puritans, in Hooker's words to "simply oppose their methinketh unto the order of the Church of England."

It is not, as Gibbs point out in his introduction to Book I, that Hooker is against the principle of sola scriptura; it is simply that, like Whitgift, he believes that the principle must be limited:

Hooker stands with the magisterial Protestant reformers by affirming the principle of sola scriptura in the sense that the Scriptures contain all that is necessary for salvation. But, over against the extreme biblicalism Hooker found in the disciplinarians, he does not allow the primacy of scriptural authority in the sphere of faith and morals to exclude the continuing authoritative role of reason and tradition in the making of expedient "human laws" concerning "matters indifferent." (49)

Thus the concept of adiaphora, or "things indifferent" is not meant as a counter to sola scriptura but rather a limitation, a restriction of sola scriptura to its proper sphere--which is matters that directly concern salvation. This was an idea that had originated half a century before with Luther's associate, Phillip Melanchthon who, in a conciliatory gesture towards Rome, argued that the traditional Catholic sacraments, while of no spiritual efficacy, nevertheless were of no harm; thus, he insinuated, these were areas on which Protestants might be willing to compromise (Cragg 264). According to Hooker, the English puritans had lost sight of this spirit of compromise. Their white-or-black system, "Christ"-or-"Antichrist," as he terms it, completely ignores the reality of grey areas; even worse, their reliance upon the Bible as an absolute moral touchstone extends the book beyond its intended purpose, which is to deliver those particulars of salvation which man could not otherwise discover. It is in this sense that the revealed word of God supplements natural reason: together, not apart, they bring man to the gates of heaven.

Hooker's most compelling argument on this point comes in the second book:

But it is not the worde of God which doth or possibl~~i~~e can assure us, that wee do well to thinke it his worde. For if any one booke of Scripture did give testimonie to all; yet still that Scripture which giveth credite to the rest, would require another Scripture to give credite unto it: neither could we ever come unto any pause whereon to rest our assurance this way, so that unlesse besides scripture there were some thing which might assure us that we do well, we could not thinke we do well, no not in being assured that scripture is a sacred and holie rule of well doing. (2.4.2)

The echoes here of the Quinque Viae are apparent. Where Saint Thomas applied the principles of reason to the world in order to demonstrate the rational necessity of a First Cause, Hooker applies those same principles to the act of credence wherein we accept the scriptures as God's word. Just as the world cannot be its own cause, so too the scriptures cannot confirm themselves as the word of God. As God is a necessary postulate in order to account for the existence of the world, so too the spiritual witness of natural reason must be presupposed in order to confirm the scriptures. Natural reason comes to actuate faith in this sense: it renders up the judgement by which the scriptures themselves are accepted as valid.

Thus we find in faith and reason bound up in a dialectic of actualization. The natural faith that is implicit in the correspondence theory of truth serves to actuate the first

principles of reason by which the mind apprehends the real world; natural reason, in turn, serves to validate those tenets of supernatural faith outlined in the scriptures. The intricate knot of faith and reason, hence, cannot be severed. The puritan inclination to do so runs contrary to reason, which is an innate capacity of man:

Nor let any man thinke, that following the judgement of naturall discretion in such cases, we can have no assurance that we please God. For to the author and God of our nature, how shall any operation proceeding in naturall sort be in that respect unacceptable? (2.4.5)

Natural reason, for Hooker, carries with it the sanction of God precisely because it is natural. Since He is "the author and God of our nature," as the scriptures inform us, how can we fail to please Him by following the nature he vested in us? Again, since the scriptures inform us that we are created in His own image, it would seem to follow that we are most godlike when we are true to ourselves. And since Christ himself is described by scripture as reason incarnate, surely there can be nothing inherently evil in reason. But these are the tenets of a supernatural faith, not of natural reason. We could not know that we were created in His image, nor that the Word became flesh, unless the Bible informed us: the

implications of acceptance of the scriptures seems to be a justification of natural reason.

And as natural reason focuses back upon scripture, it finds that much of what comprises the common range of human experience is neither expressly commanded nor forbidden. It finds that many practices never even mentioned in the Bible have come over the course of centuries to be the custom and convenience of everyday life and worship. The idea of "things indifferent" thus becomes, for Hooker, the only rational response that coordinates the mandates of Christian life with the urgencies of secular survival:

. . . it is not the Scriptures setting downe such things as indifferent, but their not setting downe as necessarie that doth make them to be indifferent. (ibid.)

To expand upon this point, Hooker offers a metaphor of a man presented with a choice of meats:

When manie meates are set before me, all are indifferent, none unlawfull, I take one as most convenient. If scripture require me so to do, then is not the thing indifferent, because I must do what scripture requireth. They are all indifferent, I might take any, scripture doth not require of me to make any speciall choice of one: I doe notwithstanding make choice of one, my discretion teaching me so to do. A hard case, that hereupon I should be justly condemned of sinne. (ibid.)

By using something as mundane as a choice of supper for a metaphor, Hooker wants to illustrate the preposterousness of the notion that whatever is not positively enjoined in scripture is therefore sin. Since a man must eat in order to survive, he must make the very mundane choice of what to eat every day of his life. It is in such instances that the notion of sola scriptura becomes ridiculous. (And indeed there is a discernable note of ridicule in Hooker's reference to "a hard case," above.) For as a dietary guide, the Bible provides, at best, a rather limited menu; a man might well starve, or at least be greatly inconvenienced, if he were to restrict himself only to what he finds there commanded.

Moreover, Hooker asks his opponents to consider the cases of those men whose examples we find in the scriptures themselves:

Then let them cast backe their eyes unto former generations of men, and marke what was done in the prime of the world. Seth, Enoch, Noah, Sem, Abraham, Job, and the rest that lived before any syllable of the lawe of God was written, did they not sinne as much as we doe in every action not commaunded? (2.4.6)

Since all of these figures lived prior to the deliverance of the commandments to Moses at Mount Sinai, and thus prior to

the existence of a formal collection of scriptural ordinances, the implication of sola scriptura would seem to be that all of them lived in perpetual sin. Clearly, then, it must be possible to honor God by means of natural reason--apart from revelation. According to Genesis, "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6:8). But how? There were no commandments of God to keep, no special revelations to Noah at this point in the flood narrative. Noah lived five hundred years without a word from above (Genesis 5:32), and yet he managed to find grace in God's eyes.

If Noah had to live by his wits and still was able to find favor with God, then it must be that in the absence of a specific scriptural injunction, natural reason is able to discern what is righteous. Reason cannot save a man, but it does not follow therefore that reason cannot lead him towards right decisions in matters of secular expediency:

Impossible therefore it is we should otherwise
thinke, then that what things God doth neither
commaund nor forbid, the same he permitteth with
approbation either to be done or left undone.
(2.4.4)

Regarding "things indifferent," in other words, we are presented with a choice. By definition, the consequences of this choice do not directly pertain to our salvation, and so

we are left free to choose that which is expedient. By this choice, by the exercise of our natural capacity to reason, we come to please God, who is "the author and God of our nature."

The centrality of the concept of adiaphora or "things indifferent" to Hooker's position cannot be overstressed. In fact, the conformist via media would be essentially untenable without it. When the Church of England separated from Rome, it began to divest itself of certain features of its allegiance to Rome. The Act of Supremacy of 1534 denied the universal ascendancy of the pope, declaring Henry VIII the supreme ecclesiastical authority in England. After Henry was, predictably, excommunicated, a natural reaction would have been to sever once and for all every connection with Catholicism--to purify the English Church of the rites of "popery," and thereby to underscore more definitively the breach with Rome. Yet Henry actually changed very little in the day-to-day religious practices of the Church of England. Aside from seizing the wealth of the monasteries and burning the shrines of Catholic saints, Henry held fast on questions of doctrine. Thus while the ecclesiastical polity of the church was overturned, its core beliefs (including, tellingly, the traditional liturgy) were kept. The distinction between "things indifferent" and "things necessary for salvation" was

thus implicitly invoked. Hooker's defense relied upon this distinction for two reasons. First, he needed to prove that the break with Rome had not been a break with the true Christian tradition, that the Church of England still represented an unbroken line in matters pertinent to salvation, and that the separation had been an act of secular expediency with no spiritual consequences. In this manner, Hooker answered by implication the Catholic recusants who argued for a reconciliation with the Church of Rome. But he also had to address the gathering tide of puritan sentiment which contended for a more complete break with Rome, a purging of everything which smacked of popery, and a movement in the direction of the presbyterianism which Calvin had established in Geneva. The thrust of these reforms, Hooker held, was to alter "things indifferent" since the puritans now focused on polity, not doctrine. Against the puritans, he would argue that the status quo should be maintained unless a compelling reason could be given why it should be changed. Hooker was thus able on the one hand to justify reform and on the other to halt it.

The English Church stood, therefore, as both a religious construct and also a rational one--a duality which parallels Hooker's prior distinction between the invisible and visible

churches. The continuation of the doctrinal line from the times of the Church Fathers ensured that the religion of England served as a conduit for Christ's message. But in the Church of England's responses to matters of secular expediency, such as ecclesiastical self-determination, Hooker found the justifiable exercise of man's natural capacity for rational action. Reason and faith had once again been knotted together in the institutional entity of the church.

For Hooker, the true church represents the physical embodiment of the Thomistic synthesis; it combines the rational philosophy of Aristotle with the spiritual imperative of Christianity. The propagation of the gospel message is an act of reason, conducted by reasonable men, towards an end which is both reasonable and divine: salvation. To conceive of the church in this way is itself a rational act, an validation of the spiritual efficacy of reason, and, as we have seen, fundamentally opposed to the spiritual limitations that Calvin would impose upon reason.

Ironically, the mistrust in which Calvin holds man's rational capacity leads not to a humble resignation of all intellectual pretenses but to an outburst of overconfident subjective judgements. If no one, through reason, has access to God's truth, as the Calvinist maintained, then all

individual judgements are equal. Reason cannot be used to defeat a particular point of view, since reason cannot be trusted in divine matters. From this, the prospect of presbyterianism ultimately follows. Allegiance to a central secular authority is unnecessary, and (to carry the case to its logical conclusion) each church is left free to forge its own polity--based, of course, upon its own reading of the one legitimate source of spiritual guidance, the Bible.

How repugnant such a notion must have seemed to Hooker, who writes in Book V:

Let our first demaunde be therefore, that in the external forme of religion such thinges as are apparentlie, or can be sufficientlie proved effectuall and generallie fitt to set forwarde godlines, either as betokeninge the greatenes of God, or as beseeminge the dignitie of religion, or as concurring with coelestiall impressions in the mindes of men, maie be reverentlie thought of; some fewe, rare, casuall, and tollerable, or otherwise cureable inconveniences notwithstandinge. (5.6.2)

For Hooker, the visible church stands at the intersection of the natural and supernatural orders; its makeup must reflect both allegiances. As an entity whose existence is predicated on supernatural participation, the church must remain true to the doctrinal requisites handed down from the onset of the Christian Era--hence Hooker's frequent references in the later

books to the beliefs and practices of the apostles and patristic fathers. But as a rational entity, the church must exist in accordance with the common-sense requisites of secular order. This harmony can only be achieved through the exercise of natural reason, which alone is able to distinguish that which is indifferent to salvation from that which is necessary, for it is only in the realm of "things indifferent" that the church can legitimately compromise and still meet its supernatural mandate.

It is this stress upon the ongoing role of natural reason which halts any tendency of Hooker's church toward the implied subjectivism of Calvin. (The Genevan reality was quite another story.) For although the dictates of natural reason do evolve, they do not evolve at a rapid pace, nor an arbitrary one. When change is necessary, it will become apparent to all. Until the need for change becomes apparent, therefore, reason calls for the preservation of traditional ways. "Unlesse some notable publique inconvenience inforce the contrarie" (5.7.3), Hooker argues, "the judgement of antiquitie" (5.7.4) must prevail in questions of polity:

That which wisdome did first begin and hath bene
with good men longe continewed, chalengeth
allowance of them that succede, although it plead
for it selfe nothinge. That which is new, if it

promise not much, doth feare condemnation before
 triall; till triall, no man doth acquite or trust
 it, what good soever it pretend and promise. So
 that in this kinde there are fewe thinges knowne
 to be good, till such time as they grow to be
 ancient. (5.7.4)

Tradition, the vehicle for the perpetual voice of men, becomes for Hooker the locus against which change must be measured. Change, for its own sake, is to be resisted--not only because it involves unknowns, but also because it runs contrary to that which in the past has been deemed reasonable. The Thomistic synthesis implies that the perpetual voice of men carries with it the imprimatur of God, for in the exercise of their rational capacities, men have, in the past as well as the present, fulfilled their created natures.

By contrast, the limitations Calvin would impose upon man's natural reason strike at the heart of the Thomistic synthesis. Restricting reason to the domain of the physical world, Calvin indirectly and unintentionally effected "the emancipation of nature from its theological anchors" (Baker Wars 79). No longer were the principles of being a mere reflection of a lex aeterna, by which God had bound Himself "in the beginning." Rather, the principles of being were divorced from the principles of divinity. This, according to

Calvin, accounts for the preponderance of mutually-negating theologies:

But among the philosophers who have tried with reason and learning to penetrate into heaven, how shameful is the diversity! As each was furnished with higher wit, graced with art and knowledge, so did he seem to camouflage his utterances; yet if you look more closely upon all these. you will find them all to be fleeting unrealities.
(Institutes 1.5.12)

As Calvin ends this passage with the memorable statement, "no mortal ever contrived anything that did not basely corrupt religion" (ibid.), he has arrived at the culmination of theological nominalism. Nothing of reason penetrates beyond the temporal bounds of the finite world. Whatever his motives, Calvin has "inadvertantly segregated nature from grace, natural knowledge from divine revelation" (Baker 79). There is no possible commute to the City of God from the City of Man.

CHAPTER IV: SOLA SCRIPTURA VERSUS ADIAPHORA

Having established the congruency between reason and scripture, Hooker brings reason to bear upon scripture in order to demonstrate the misconception behind the puritans' sola scriptura. He summarizes the principle at the outset of Book II: "they hold that one onely lawe, the scripture, must be the rule to direct in all thinges, even so far as to the taking up of a rush or strawe" (2.1.2). The italics, which are Hooker's own, indicate a direct quote from Cartwright, who is to become for Hooker the primary voice of his opposition. As William Haugaard points out, this particular quote has a history. The image of taking up straw had years before served Whitgift as an example of adiaphora in his bitter exchange with Cartwright; Cartwright's reply, based oddly enough on an

argument from Saint Thomas, was that taking up straw, in itself indifferent, could be seen as either good or evil, depending upon the purpose for which the straw was taken up. Cartwright's contention is that "iff the taking up off a straw be donne to good ende, either off helping himselfe or others . . . it hathe the testimonie of the word off God" (Haugaard 4). Hooker's citation here of Cartwright, in other words, is a bit out of context. Nevertheless, it is indicative of why Hooker would choose Cartwright as chief spokesman for his opposition (rather than Walter Travers, who had been a more immediate nemesis in his own experience) in the first place. Cartwright revels in the logical extremes of his position. Rather than shun the most farfetched implications of sola scriptura, Cartwright embraces them. He is willing to accept scripture as his sole guide for even such menial tasks as gathering straw--with the understanding that good or evil must be judged by the ends for which the task was undertaken. For Cartwright, it is the end, not the task itself, which must be in accordance with scripture. Even so, his position remains extreme. The idea that nothing is itself indifferent, that the spirit of God, if not His literal word, must infuse every act, is a hard row to hoe. It is a logical dictum that untenable arguments are most

vulnerable in their extreme cases, and Hooker seizes upon the dictum in this, his very first citation of Cartwright.

Once the extreme has been highlighted, the next logical step for Hooker is to address the source from which Cartwright has drawn the principle of sola scriptura--which, obviously, is the bible. Cartwright had cited several Old and New Testament passages which seemed, at least to him, to imply that the scriptures alone contained and comprised the rules by which a man ought to live. The first of Cartwright's citations is Proverbs 2.9:

My sonne, if thou receive my wordes etc. then thou shalt understand justice, and judgement, and equitie, and every good way. (ibid.)

Hooker refers to this passage as "the head theoreme of all their discourses" (2.1.3). According to him, Cartwright interprets the verse to mean that the bible "is in such sort the rule of humaine actions, that simply whatsoever we doe, and are not by it directed thereunto, the same is sinne" (ibid.). By contrast, Hooker's own exegesis of the passage turns upon the phrase "my wordes," which connotes for him not simply the literal words of the bible, but the various manifestations of divine "wisedome" which are gotten by means of scripture and natural reason.

. . . see they not plainely how they restraine the manifold wayes which wisdom hath to teach men by, unto one only way of teaching, which is by scripture? The boundes of wisdom are large, and within them much is containd. Wisdom was Adams instructor in Paradise: wisdom indued the fathers, who lived before the law, with the knowledg of holy things: by the wisdom of the law of God, David attayned to excell others in understanding; and Salomon likewise to excell David by the selfe same wisdom of God teaching him many thinges besides the law. (2.1.4)

Thus enlarging the sense of God's "wordes," Hooker falls back once again on his prior defense of right reason as a viable moral instrument; it is right reason which finds out the dictates of natural law, which is, as much as scripture, the voice of God.

Curiously enough, Hooker's preference for a metaphorical reading here might seem, at first glance, to contradict his own stated exegetical methodology:

I holde it for a most infallible rule in expositions of sacred scripture, that where a litterall construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonlie the worst. (5.59.2)

To the objection that his own reading of Proverbs 2.9 is farther "from the letter" than Cartwright's, Hooker would respond that this is not a case "where a litterall construction will stand." That is, Proverbs 2.9 cannot be read

literally since the idea that scripture alone should determine "every good way" is untenable. Once again, Hooker has slid into an epistemological circularity. While he favors a literal interpretation of scripture whenever such a reading will stand, he must rely in the end upon reason in order to make that determination. The moral and theological efficacy of reason has again been presupposed in order to affirm its own role.

Hooker next focuses on Cartwright's paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 10.31, which the latter regards as further evidence that scripture alone should serve to guide men in their actions: "S. Paul sayth that whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do, we must do it to the glory of God" (2.2.1). Cartwright then proceeds to interpret the passage in this manner:

But no man can glorifie God in any thing but by obedience; and there is no obedience but in respect of the commaundement and word of God: Therefore it followeth that the word of God directeth a man in all his actions. (ibid.)

Hooker's reading of Corinthians, as we might expect, follows along much different lines. Where Cartwright states as a matter of fact that "no man can glorifie God in any thing but by obedience," Hooker questions whether Saint Paul actually

meant "that we sinne as oft as ever we goe about any thing, without an expresse intent and purpose to obey God" (ibid.). Once again, Hooker feels that the literalness of Cartwright's interpretation extends the sanction to an absurd extreme:

We move, we sleepe, we take the cuppe at the hand of our friend, a number of thinges we oftentimes doe, only to satisfie some naturall desire, without present expresse, and actuall reference unto any commaundement of God. Unto his glory even these things are done which we naturally performe, and not onely that which morally and spiritually we doe. For by every effect proceeding from the most concealed instincts of nature his power is made manifest. But it doth not therefore follow that of necessitie we shall sinne, unlesse we expressly intend this in every such particular. (ibid.)

God is the creator of our human natures, Hooker says, endowing us with the capacity for rationality, and thus in the exercise of reason we continuously glorify Him--whether or not His glory is our special intention from moment to moment. It is possible, in other words, to act towards the glory of God without an express desire to glorify God; it is possible even to glorify Him by accident. This must be true, for example, in instances of sudden heroism where moral action is required before the thought to glorify God can even take place. To hold sudden heroism as sin simply because it lacks a proper degree

of premeditation would be to upset our very understanding of right and wrong.

In a similar manner, Hooker disposes of Cartwright's citation from the First Letter of Timothy (2.3.1). Hooker then concludes his brief exegetical survey with a response to Cartwright's citation of Romans 14.23, which Hooker concedes to be "that which of all other things in scripture is most stood upon" (2.4.1). And Saint Paul's words would seem, indeed, to undermine the entire concept of adiaphora, or things indifferent: "whatsoever is not of fayth, is sinne."

Saint Paul's distinction does indeed appear to be black versus white, with no room for grey. But for Hooker, the key to understanding the true intention of the passage is the phrase "of fayth." He opposes Cartwright's contention that "fayth is not but in respect of the worde of God. Therefore whatsoever is not done by the worde of God is sinne" (ibid.). Cartwright's reading in fact cuts to the core of what separates him from Hooker, for in restricting the efficacy of faith to the domain of scripture, Cartwright presupposes a breach between the "worde of God" and the natural world. In effect, he has unmade the Thomistic synthesis by the implicit invocation of a theological nominalism; he is on the verge of a doctrine of double-truth, where a truth commanded by faith

need not be reconciled with the truth of reason. And if "whatsoever is not of fayth, is sinne," the association of reason and sin becomes inevitable.

Hooker responds to Cartwright's limited concept of faith, predictably, with a wider view:

In which generalitie the object of fayth may not so narrowly be restrayned, as if the same did extend no further then to the only scriptures of God. Though (sayth our Savior) ye beleeeve not me, beleeeve my workes, that ye may know and beleeeve that the father is in me and I in him. The other Disciples sayd unto Thomas, we have seene the Lord; but his aunswere unto them was, Except I see in his handes the print of the nayles, and put my finger into them, I will not beleeeve. Can there be any thing more plaine, then that which by these two sentences appeareth, namely, that there may be a certaine beleefe grounded upon other assurances than Scripture; any thing more cleare, then that we are sayd not only to beleeeve the thinges which we knowe by anothers relation, but even whatsoever we are certainly perswaded of, whether it be by reason or by sense? (2.4.1)

What Hooker contends is that "fayth" may be understood more broadly as an act whereby the intellect accepts a conclusion on the basis of empirical evidence. When Christ exhorts the Jews at the temple to "beleeeve my workes" (John 10:38), his reference to rational methodology, to observation and inference, is unmistakable. To assuage the disciple Thomas's doubts, Christ permits physical investigation of His

crucifixion wounds. Thus, to Hooker's mind, the continuity between faith and reason is affirmed by Christ himself. Hooker does not quote, though he might have, Christ's own reply to Thomas, after the wounds convince him that Christ has in fact risen: "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Though He designates as blessed those whose belief is founded upon blind faith, Christ acknowledges that an inference drawn from empirical evidence can serve to confirm faith. This is the kind of God-sanctioned rationality Hooker has in mind when he insists "that there may be a certaine beliefe grounded upon other assurances than Scripture."

But at this juncture a brief digression is in order to examine in greater depth the heritage out of which Cartwright's argument, that "fayth is not but in respect of the worde of God," grows. For his stress here upon faith as the principal instrument towards salvation through scripture harkens back to Luther's fundamental break with the Church of Rome; it was Luther, after all, who struck the most resounding blows against the synthesis of Thomas. Although it may seem, at first glance, that Cartwright has undertaken a posture of idiosyncratic anti-rationalism, the truth is that his understanding of the relationship between reason and faith is

in line with the Lutheran tradition; and it is neither as naive nor as simplistic as it appears. Though it involves a sequence of intellectual gymnastics to harmonize into a rational system Luther's somewhat arbitrary assortment of pronouncements, the effort offers a valuable insight into the complexity of issues to which Hooker's tract is addressed.

It was Luther who, in his preface to Paul's Letter to the Romans, declares: "Faith itself comes only through the word of God, the gospel." As he understands it, faith must transcend and supersede reason in order for a man to be saved:

We reach the conclusion that faith alone justifies us and fulfills the law; and this because faith brings us the spirit gained by the merits of Christ. The spirit, in turn, gives us the happiness and freedom at which the law aims; and this shows that good works really proceed from faith. (Luther 22)

The ramifications of this passage are both subtle and profound, and in fact the entire direction of the Protestant Reformation can be glimpsed within these few lines. For as Luther remarks in his "Preface To The New Testament," the great mistake of the Roman Church had been to "make Christ into a Moses" and "the gospel into a book of law or doctrine" (Luther 17). On the contrary, he believes that the point of the gospel is freedom, not bondage; we are not bound to good

works, for nothing we can do on our own merits salvation--so vast is the onus of Original Sin. The "good news"--literally, the "gospel"--is that Christ, by His death upon the cross, has earned our salvation for us. All that is required of us is belief in Him, or faith: ". . . the gospel demands no works to make us holy and to redeem us. Indeed, it condemns such works, and demands only faith in Christ, because He has overcome sin, death and hell for us" (ibid.). It is through unquestioned and unquestioning faith in Christ that we ". . . take to ourselves His death and victory as if they were our own."

But the unquestioned and unquestioning faith, it might well be argued, amounts to a renunciation of our rational selves. For it is the nature of the rational self to question that for which we find no empirical evidence; surely, it was the rational self in the disciple Thomas who demanded sense verification of the crucifixion wounds. For Luther, and indeed for Calvin and Cartwright after him, it is this rational self which must be subjugated in order to enjoy the full benefits of Christ's sacrifice.

Hence, the principle that human works are of no use towards salvation becomes a cornerstone of the Reformation. In effect, this principle obviates the moral dimension of the

gospels. Their message is not instructive but wholly revelatory:

On every count, it is evident that the evangelion does not form a book of laws, but a proclamation of the good things which Christ has offered us for our own, if only we believe. On the other hand, Moses, in his books, urges, drives, threatens, lashes out, and severely punishes; for he is a maker and administrator of law. That, moreover, is why laws are not prescribed for believers. (ibid.)

What Christ has offered us by his sacrifice is ours if only we believe. No other stipulation is attached as a means to justify our secular existence, neither attendance to a prescribed system of rituals nor adherence to a traditional moral code. The corpus of puritan demands upon the Church of England follows from this single Lutheran premise. If rituals are void of the power to justify, then the Church would be better off without them; they are mere clutter amidst what should be a celebration of the gospel message. The scriptures are to be read and expounded, and the two sacraments grounded in those scriptures (baptism and the eucharist) are to be administered, since these alone are witnessed and confirmed by Holy Ghost. Whatever else the Roman Church has attached to the practice of Christianity is to be shunned since it is derived not from the Holy Ghost but from church councils. The church

councils, we must recall, are comprised of priests and scholars; but for Luther, neither piety nor learning serves to justify a man before God. Faith alone justifies him. The community of believers thus becomes a community of priests. No intermediary between believer and God is requisite, especially not one whose claim to the position is mere discipline and scholarship. The role of the episcopacy is rendered moot. The raw and unschooled faith of a child is as righteous, perhaps even more righteous, than the trained faith of a cleric.

Once the intermediary role of the institutional church has been undermined, the Lutheran vision of proper ecclesiastical ceremony becomes by and large a matter of less is more. This represents a radical departure therefore from traditional Catholic practices--including those kept in tact by the English Church. For Hooker, the purpose of ceremony is chiefly to serve as a conduit towards salvation; each aspect, from the priestly hierarchy to the administration of sacraments, is geared to this end. The puritans, by contrast, follow the Lutheran lead. Although polity remains an essential sign of the true church, the polity itself does not facilitate salvation. To purify the church of its cumbersome polity, including and especially the hierarchy of priests, stands as

the common goal among the many strains of the English puritan movement.

The break with Rome had meant few actual changes in the day to day practice of English Christianity. As Davies notes:

In church order there seemed to be a close approximation between Rome and Canterbury, for the Church of England retained the threefold historic ministry of bishop, priest, and deacon, and the leaders of the church even inherited some of their former political duties as the ecclesiastical agents of royalty. The same traditional character of the ministry was to be seen also in the retention of the liturgy, instead of giving the ministers the right to frame their own prayers within a set of general directions, as was the case in the Reformed churches of Switzerland. (31)

By contrast, the puritan initiative would have been felt in the life of every churchgoing Englishman. The conduct of the liturgy, the nature of penance, the role of the clergy--on these and other issues the thrust of the puritan movement entailed a dramatic and recognizable upheaval of religious life. And it is the idea of just such an upheaval that Hooker deplores. His contention is that upheavals, in general, are evil because they run contrary not only to the collected wisdom of the past but also to the settled social order of the present; unless incontrovertible reason can be produced why it should occur, change for its own sake is both dangerous and

irrational. In the absence of rational necessity for change, reason commands conservatism.

But according to Luther, it is the natural reason of man that impedes the processes of the Holy Spirit. The collective wisdom of the past has fallen into error by misconstruing salvation on its own rational terms. In his essay "The Freedom of a Christian," Luther writes:

Since human nature and natural reason, as it is called, are by nature superstitious and ready to imagine, when laws and works are prescribed, that righteousness must be obtained through laws and works; and further, since they are trained and confirmed in this opinion by the practice of all earthly lawgivers, it is impossible that they should of themselves escape from the slavery of works and come to a knowledge of the freedom of faith. (Luther 85)

The nature of the rational mind is economic: it proceeds on the assumption of cause and effect: obedience and reward, disobedience and punishment. It is led by secular experience in these matters, for that is the way of the world. Thus we come to imagine that heaven can be earned, that works count towards salvation. For Luther, however, Christ's sacrifice upon the cross has brought us salvation; all that is required of us is faith in that sacrifice. Yet even that faith is not our own doing--it is the working of God's grace upon our

wills. The same sentiment is echoed in the Third Book of Calvin's Institutes:

From this relation it is clear that those who are justified by faith are justified apart from the merit of works--in fact, without the merit of works. For faith receives that righteousness which the gospel bestows. Now the gospel differs from the law in that it does not link righteousness to works but lodges it solely in God's mercy. . . . Excluding the law, he [Saint Paul, in Romans 3:21] denies that we are aided by works and that we attain righteousness by working; instead, we come empty to receive it. (Institutes 3.11.18)

Our salvation, both Luther and Calvin agree, is ultimately beyond our control. This is perhaps the core doctrine of the Protestant reformation, as summed up by Davies:

The word of liberation, as it came to Luther and those like him, was that salvation had already been won by Christ; it had only to be accepted in faith; it no longer had to be achieved. (18)

And as Robert Hoopes suggests, with regard to the principle of justification by faith alone:

There is perhaps no reformation doctrine that clashes more violently with the great classical-humanist tradition that stretches from Plato and Aristotle, through the Stoics, to Thomas Aquinas. That tradition founded its hopes for moral and religious improvement on faith in man's essential goodness and rational self-control. (Hoopes 105)

The ramifications of justification through faith alone are indeed profound. For if eternal salvation is none of our doing, and all God's, then He must have predestined who is to be saved and who isn't. What follows logically from this is a greatly diminished role for the church, since its traditional function as intermediary on behalf of the believer has been rendered moot. Administering the remaining sacraments is now reduced in importance relative to propogating the gospel--the "good news" of Christ's sacrifice, accepted by faith. The puritan emphasis upon the activity of preaching follows. As Davies notes: "Justification by faith was indeed an article for the standing or falling of the church" (19).

Luther and Calvin contended that in the attribution of cause and effect to the divine process of justification, the mind imposes its own rational calculus upon God. For both of them, this is the principal reason that the Roman Church went astray. For example, Luther's famous 95 Theses were written in response to the Catholic practice of selling indulgences for the temporal remission of sins, after forgiveness. The idea that sins must, or even can, be remitted by a priest, in the name of God, implies a rate of exchange, a direct relationship of causes in this life and effects in the next. If sins can be remitted by such earthly activities, then it follows that good

works (which are the antithesis of sins) should contribute positively towards the process of justification. For Luther, however, good works were but a manifestation of faith--it was faith in Christ, itself inspired by the unmerited gift of grace, that justified a man before God.

As Davies points out, Rome regarded Luther's teachings of salvation through faith alone as potentially morally anarchic, "an invitation to Anti-nomianism" (18). If a person's good works cannot contribute towards his justification, then his lack of good works need not hold him back. The Protestants countered that inherent in Catholicism was Pelagianism, the belief that the individual could earn his way into heaven on his own merits, with no divine aid save what was provided by the church. Each side, therefore, saw in the other the probability of excess:

If Pelagianism was the danger into which Catholicism could easily fall with its emphasis on good works, the peril confronting Protestantism was Anti-nomianism. The former attributed too much to man and too little to God; the latter gave God all the glory in the initiation and accomplishment of salvation at the risk of making a man too passive a recipient of God's gifts. (Davies 22)

It is characteristic that the Church of England should seek to rule out both of these excesses in the very formulation of its

creed. The Eleventh of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of 1571 reads:

We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification.

With Eleventh Article, then, the Church of England explicitly embraces Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone, "the central theological tenet of the Reformation" (Davies 23). Yet the Twelfth Article seems an immediate refutation of the antinomianism, almost before the charge can be levelled:

Albeit that Good Works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgement; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith; insomuch that by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit.

Good works, therefore, follow necessarily from justification by faith. The emphasis is crucial, for it rules out even the possibility of antinomianism. The individual who has been justified cannot choose but do good works; for they "spring out" of the faith, the "lively faith," by which he has been

justified. But on the slim chance that this article might be interpreted as an affirmation of the efficacy of good works in and of themselves, the Thirteenth Article treats works that are done in the absence of prior justification:

Works done before the grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ; neither do they make men to receive grace, or (as the School-authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.

Good works that are done with the intention of gaining a place in heaven, therefore, are not only futile, they are downright sinful. The only proper cause for good works is the honest and unintentional expression of grace-inspired faith. Good works done with ulterior motives are a dissimulation, for the sake of appearances before men. But God recognizes such pretense, regardless of the secular result, as sin.

In this case, the position of the English Church is very much in line with the puritan platform, as illustrated in a lecture given by John Knewstub, an associate of Cartwright's from the 1570s onward. Published in 1578, the lecture is based upon the twentieth chapter of Exodus. Knewstub writes:

So far off then are our own works from bringing their desert with them and opening by themselves the gates of his goodness, that the goodwill of God the father prepared the way even for the merit of Christ's passion. Our own works come short of being the first that have commended us unto God, when both the goodwill of God the father and the merit also of Jesus Christ have been there before them in our behalf. Let men therefore cease to say or imagine that their own works were the first that ever spake one good word for them, when it is so assured by the word of God that they have had friends in that court that have done for them, when all the credit of their own doings was utterly rejected and could not be heard. (Knewstub 360)

The puritan Knewstub's stress upon the impotence of a person's good works in the face of God's judgement is the party line of the Church of England. He even includes in the lecture what amounts to a restatement of the Thirteenth Article:

And in very deed, this persuasion that he is our God and so tenderly affected towards us is the mother of all true obedience, the fountain from whence floweth all true worship and service of God. It is the note that discerneth between the works of a true Christian and the deeds of an infidel or heathen man. The Christian worketh his obedience having this persuasion, that God is already his God. The infidel and unbeliever hath no such persuasion, and therefore his doings come not frankly and freely from him to honor the Lord, but slavishly and servilely to serve himself and after that manner, as it were, to get within the Lord and to earn his salvation of himself. (324)

Faith, in other words, must precede a man's good works. If the situation is reversed, if the good works are done in order to gain God's blessings, then the mind has reverted to the very economics of obedience and reward that Luther had inveighed against. Properly construed, good works are undertaken with prior confidence in God's blessings--His blessings cannot be occasioned by the works themselves.

Hooker's own perception of the relationship of good works to salvation seems for once less in line with the orthodoxy of the Articles of Religion than does the view of such puritans as Knewstub:

Rewards doe alwaies presuppose such duties performed as are rewardable. Our natural meanes therefore unto blessednes are our workes: nor is it possible that nature should ever finde any other way to salvation than only this. But examine the workes which we doe and since the firste foundation of the world, what one can say, My wayes are pure? Seeing then all flesh is guiltie of that for which God hath threatened eternallie to punish, what possibilitie is there this way to be saved? (1.11.5)

This passage is troubling in several respects. To begin with Hooker implies that "our workes" might be regarded as duties which, once performed, are rewardable. That our works are in any way rewardable in terms of salvation is clearly contrary to the Article Eleven, "that we are justified by Faith only."

But the passage also raises onus of Original Sin, in light of which no one can claim that his ways are pure. Since "nature" cannot find another way to salvation besides good works, and since "all flesh is guiltie of that for which God hath threatened eternallie to punish," it would seem that we are doomed.

Hooker's conclusion, however, is that even though there is no natural way to achieve salvation, through scripture God has revealed supernaturally what must be done: "the mysterie or secret way of salvation":

God him self is the teacher of the truth, wherby
is made knowne the supernaturall way of salvation
and law for them to live in that shalbe saved.
(ibid.)

What Hooker is getting at here is the role of scripture in salvation, an issue that we shall take up in greater detail shortly. For the present is necessary only to remark that Hooker sees scripture as a supplement to human reason, a repository of what must be done towards salvation that man could not, on his own, otherwise discern. Yet scripture is a means to salvation precisely because it instructs us in what we must do: just believing what scripture says is not enough: "Not that God doth require nothing unto happines at the handes

of men saving onely a naked beliefe . . . " (1.11.6). It is not by faith alone, according to Hooker, that we are saved. His point, rather, is "that without beliefe all other things are as nothing," and that belief "is the ground of those other divine virtues" (ibid.). Faith therefore precedes works in the sense that we must believe in the scriptures as God's revealed word, as his path towards salvation, in order then to go ahead and do what is required of us.

According to Peter Lake, Hooker's teachings on the matter of the efficacy of works

completely undercut the insistence of the incapacity of sinful man to do anything to win salvation, which orthodox Calvinists took to be an essential feature of the protestant rejection of the popish doctrines of merit and justification by works. For Calvinists the only ground for the decree of election was the mere will and good pleasure of God. Any suggestion that it might be based on God's foreknowledge of man's works led, on the Calvinist view, straight to popery and Pelagianism. (184)

How then was Hooker able to sidestep these dangerous paths? As Lake summarizes,

Hooker maintained that the want of 'moral righteousness and honesty of life' 'excludeth from salvation'. He was not, of course, arguing that such virtues could win or deserve salvation, merely that without them salvation was unattainable. (185)

For Hooker, in other words, good works in themselves could not obtain salvation. But lack of good works could deny salvation to one who otherwise might be saved. Good works are necessary not to gain salvation but preserve it. Hooker thus is able to skirt the charge of pelagianism and simultaneously to maintain the necessity of good works.

Actually, Hooker was, in this instance, making use of a distinction prominent among Continental Reformers, as well as English Protestants, between justification as "God's forgiving acquittal of sinful man" and sanctification as justification's consequence, by which was meant "the inner regeneration of the Holy Spirit" (Davies 19). Prior to his Lawes, in a 1585 tractate entitled "A Learned Discourse of Justification, Workes, and How the Foundation of Faith Is Overthrowne," Hooker describes the justification-sanctification distinction thusly:

by the one we are interested in the righte of inheritinge, by the other we are broughte to the actuall possessinge of eternall blisse, and so thend of both is everlasting lyfe. (Vol.5:114)

Through the process of justification, we are possessed of the faith necessary for our eternal salvation, what Hooker calls

"the righte of inheritinge." However, we are still able to forfeit that salvation if we are not moved to good works. It is through sanctification that "we are broughte to the actuall possessinge of eternall blisse." Thus sanctification can only be construed as the faith-inspired initiative that directs us to good works. It is the final earthly step whereby the elect come into possession of salvation. Hooker therefore is able to utilize the traditional Protestant justification-sanctification distinction and to tailor it to the efficacy of good works.

As Egil Grisliis points out in his Introduction to the "sermons and tractates," Hooker's insistence upon both justification by faith and efficacy of works is evidence that "his intent remained synthetic: he wished to incorporate as much of Rome's formulation as possible without forsaking his own Protestant commitment" (Vol.5:unpaged proof). Yet he held no illusions of producing an account of justification agreeable to both sides, only "to formulate a definition that would be applicable in his own church" (ibid.).

The issues of justification by faith and the efficacy of good works are, of course, integrally related to the doctrine of the eucharist, as variously interpreted by Rome, Geneva and Canterbury. The question of the exact nature of the sacrament,

the sense in which the body and blood of Christ exist within, is illustrative of how the discrepant epistemologies of the Roman and reformed churches are manifest in a particular theological point. Although this is an epistemological issue, the ramifications touch upon the function of the church, the role of the minister, and also the complicated relationship between reason and faith. And it is significant that the various answers to the question of the eucharist serve to highlight the basic epistemological schisms among the great branches of Christianity.

It is natural that the position of the Roman Church must be delineated first, not only because it evolved first chronologically, but also because it is the position against which the several Protestant sects react; when Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and, later, Hooker come to address the question of the eucharist, they do so by contrast with the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation.

Although it is difficult to establish the earliest formulation of the doctrine, Paschasius Radbertus, an abbot of the ninth century, wrote a treatise entitled On the Body and Blood of the Lord in which he argued that while the bread and wine of communion seem unchanged,

yet we must believe them to be simply a figure and that, after consecration, they are nothing else than the body and blood of Christ . . . and that, to speak more marvellously, to be clearly the very flesh which was born of Mary, and suffered on the cross and rose from the tomb. . . . (Bettenson 209)

Radbertus thus sounds the keynote of the doctrine of transubstantiation as he assigns the primary reality of the eucharist after consecration to the very body and the very blood with which Christ existed in the time of King Herod. The fact that Radbertus goes so far in his rhetoric as to insist that it is the very same flesh "which was born of Mary, and suffered on the cross" indicates that by the ninth century some Christians at least had come to regard the presence of Christ as symbolic rather than real. Radbertus cannot philosophically justify this doctrine; he can only state it "more marvellously" and with dogmatic fervor.

Saint Thomas, however, utilized the Aristotelian theory of substance and accident to put forward the doctrine of transubstantiation in much less marvelous terms. The sensible properties of a physical object, according to Aristotle, comprise the object's "accidents"; the essential imperceptible nature of the object, in which the accidents are found, is its "substance." Thomas argues that after consecration the

substances of the bread and wine are changed to the actual body and blood of Christ, although the accidents remain unchanged. While we perceive no change with our senses, Christ's presence is real, not just symbolic. The process of transubstantiation, of course, is miraculous and wrought by God and not the priest. Thomas does not explain how exactly the change is accomplished but merely asserts that such a change is possible and that it does not violate the principles of reason.

Calvin's reaction to this teaching is, characteristically, hostile. To begin with, he quarrels with the very purpose of the Catholic Mass, of which the eucharist is the high point. The "most pestilential error" of the Scholastics, according to him, is "the belief that the Mass is a sacrifice and offering to obtain forgiveness of sins" (Institutes 4.18.1). Calvin's contention is that Christ's own sacrifice upon the cross finished the matter, and that to sacrifice him again and again in the eucharist is blasphemous; he cites Christ's last words, "It is finished" (John 19.30), as an indication that

Christ, dying, testifies that by his one sacrifice all that pertained to our salvation has been accomplished and fulfilled. Are we to be allowed daily to sew innumerable patches upon such a

sacrifice, as if it were imperfect, when he has so clearly commended its perfection? (4.18.3)

Calvin's entire conception of reformed theology is inherent in his views on the Mass and eucharist. If, as Calvin supposes, God has predetermined who will be saved and who will perish, then Christ's single death upon the cross accomplished the divine reconciliation needed for the salvation of the chosen few. Nothing they do for themselves, no works, can alter their paths toward heaven. The Mass-as-sacrifice becomes, to Calvin, a redundancy because a sacrifice is performed in order to gain acceptance; but those who are to be saved have already been accepted once and forever. Calvin argues:

Who can trust that his sins are forgiven, when he has seen a new forgiveness? And it is no way out to say that we obtain forgiveness of sins in the Mass solely because it has already been purchased by Christ's death. This amounts to nothing else than to boast that we have been redeemed by Christ on condition that we redeem ourselves. . . . What now remains of Christ's Passion, except that it is an example of redemption by which we learn that we are our own redeemers? (4.18.6)

When Christ commanded his disciples to partake of the bread and wine of the Last Supper with the words "Take, eat; this is my body" and "This is my blood of the new testament, which is

shed for many" (Mark 14.22-24), he himself began the practice of the eucharist. But the eucharistic meal means for Calvin

that we are quickened by the true partaking of him; and he has therefore designated this partaking by the words "eating" and "drinking," in order that no one should think that the life that we receive from him is received by mere knowledge. As it is not the seeing but the eating of bread that suffices to feed the body, so the soul must truly and deeply become partaker of Christ that it may be quickened to spiritual life by his power. (4.17.5)

Calvin's interpretation, known as virtualism, holds that the bread and the wine are not the vehicles of Christ's physical body and blood but rather of the spiritual efficacy of his sacrifice. The virtues that were incarnate in Christ's person become ours as we receive the eucharistic meal; they are "made ours by faith, and . . . this eating is the result and effect of faith" (ibid.). Without true faith, in other words, the virtues are not received. Even though wicked men might receive the bread and wine, it is of no spiritual use to them; their lack of faith renders the act meaningless.

Calvin argues that the Scholastics, in contending that Christ's presence in the eucharist is physical rather than spiritual, have in effect undermined the historical perfection of Christ's sacrifice upon the cross:

The sacrament promised that by Christ's death we are not merely once restored to life, but are continually revived, for all the parts of our salvation have then been fulfilled. The sacrifice of the Mass sings the far different tune that Christ ought to be sacrificed daily to be of any benefit to us. (4.18.7)

The Roman Mass-as-sacrifice view also implies the necessity of the priest as leader in the sacrifice, as consecrator of the elements, thus reinforcing the intermediary function of the church between the individual and God. Thus the idea of transubstantiation, far from being a rarified philosophical point, weds the theological dogma of Catholicism to the priestly hierarchy of Roman polity. It becomes for Calvin, therefore, a focal point of attack. It is no wonder that his diatribe against the Roman eucharist soon segues to consider the role of priests:

We also deny that they are priests in the sense that they by such oblation intercede before God for the people and, having appeased God, obtain atonement for sins. For Christ is the sole Pontiff and Priest of the New Testament, to whom all priesthoods have been transferred, and in whom they have been closed and terminated. (4.18.14)

As Thomas had utilized the Aristotelian doctrine of substance and accident to formulate a rational justification of the eucharistic miracle, so Calvin utilizes Thomas's rationale to

forward his own tactical assault upon the teaching of Rome. Real Presence, as explicated by Thomas, does indeed render the Mass sacrificial--from there, Calvin proceeds with his caustic examination of the body of Catholic dogma.

Yet it should be noted that Real Presence is implied in Luther's views on the eucharist as well. The fact is that Calvin's delineation of virtualism is as incompatible with Luther's position as with Thomas's, but it is Thomas' Roman orthodoxy, rather than Luther's idiosyncratic reform, upon which Calvin centers his attack.

Luther's position, commonly termed consubstantiation, is most clearly put forth in his sermon entitled "The Lord's Supper." He states that in the performance of the eucharist, "the minister binds God's Word to the bread . . . and likewise to the wine" (235). Even though the word "consubstantiation" is found nowhere in Luther, it has been attached to his view primarily to distinguish it from transubstantiation, which entails the annihilation of the substances of bread and wine; in consubstantiation, the substances of the bread and wine remain and simultaneously coexist with the actual substance of Christ's body, or "the Word." While Thomas sought to explain the lack of observable alteration in the bread and wine by raising the Aristotelian

distinction between substance and accident, the Lutheran position is defiantly non-rational:

Therefore, when you hear the word "is," then do not doubt. Thus the sacrament is bread and body, wine and blood, as the words say and to which they are connected. If, therefore, God speaks these words, then don't search any higher, but take off your hat; and if a hundred thousand devils, learned men, and spirits were to come and say, How can this be? you answer that one single word of God is worth more than all of these. A hundred thousand learned men are not as wise as one little hair of our God. (ibid.)

Naturally, this sort of rhetoric renders Luther's argument invulnerable, either super-rational or sub-rational, depending upon the predisposition of the reader.

The fourth interpretation of the eucharist, and the most readily explicated (and perhaps the most accessible to common sense) is associated with the name Huldreich Zwingli (1484-1531), a Swiss Protestant reformer. His position, known as memorialism, is that the Lord's Supper serves merely as a symbolic reminder of Christ's sacrifice; the elements of bread and wine are by no means changed into the body and blood of Jesus.

Horton Davies' account of the eucharistic controversy in England (Davies 76-124),¹⁰ details the subtleties involved, and chronicles the struggle of the English Church to come to terms with these issues. The sheer number of issues to be dealt with permits us an insight into the complexities the church faced:

What were the chief Scriptural sources for the institution and meaning of the Eucharist? did not John 6 and I Corinthians 11 give radically different interpretation? How were the Dominical words Hoc est corpus meum ("This is my body") to be interpreted--literally or figuratively? Did "body" refer to Christ's historical body, His resurrected body, or the church as His extension or "Body"? If a literal interpretation was preferred, was "Transubstantiation" or "Consubstantiation" the better interpretation of Christ's presence, following Scripture and the Fathers? Or was it even better to affirm this as a supreme and transcendent mystery? Where is the "body" of Christ located: on the altar, in heaven, or in the hearts of the faithful? If it is on the altar, is the body "in" or "under" the bread and wine, and at what point in the Liturgy does consecration take place? Is the Eucharist a propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead? But if Christ's sacrifice was complete on the Cross, what need was there for repetition? Or was the Eucharist a memorial banquet? Or was it the oblation of the church with thanksgiving? What were the eschatological dimensions of the Eucharist? Is consecration effected by Christ the Word made flesh as the priest uses His words of institution, as was commonly held in the West, or

¹⁰ See also C.W. Dugmore's full length study Eucharist Doctrine in England from Hooker to Waterland (New York: Macmillan, 1942).

was it, as in the East, effected by the agency of the re-creating Holy Spirit? Was faith essential to the reception of the Eucharist, or would a wicked man really be partaking of the body of Christ? Who were the chief exponents of the various interpretations of the modality of Christ's sacramental presence, and were their philosophical presuppositions nominalist or idealist? Was there a direct ratio between the more conservative doctrine of the Eucharist and its more frequent reception? to be precise, did a transubstantiatory interpretation led to more frequent reception of Holy Communion than a Zwinglian or Memorialist interpretation of the Lord's supper? (Davies 77)

Given such a list, it is small wonder that even before Henry VIII's Act of Supremacy in 1534, English Catholics had begun to wrestle with eucharistic questions. As early as 1527, John Fisher published a work entitled De Veritate Corporis et Sanguinis Christi in Eucharistia in which he argued against Zwingli's memorialism. He affirmed the Real Presence of Christ and the principles of transubstantiation, citing the 1500 year tradition of the church as his main support. That support, of course, was to disintegrate in 1534, and it is no coincidence that Henry had Fisher executed a year later (Davies 85-87).

Like Fisher, Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall of Durham put forth the Catholic point of view, namely, that tradition as well as scripture supported the doctrine of Real Presence, and yet he hesitates, in his 1551 work De Corporis et Sanguinis Domini in

Eucharistia, to name transubstantiation as the means by which the presence is rendered: "But how the bread, which before consecration was common bread, by the ineffable sanctification of the Spirit passed into His Body, the most learned of the ancients regarded as something inscrutable" (Davies 88-89). Tunstall then proceeds to list the several opinions that have come down through the years and concludes: "But each of these opinions sought to maintain in common that one thing, that there truly is the body of Christ, because to deny that is clearly against faith" (ibid.). Ruling out only memorialism, Tunstall is perhaps the most open-minded of the Tudor Catholic sacramental theologians (90). Although he was imprisoned, Tunstall was never executed.

The year 1551 also saw Stephen Gardiner's Assertion of the true Catholic Faith, touching the most blessed Sacrament of the Altar with confutation of a booke written against the same. Gardiner's treatise was directed against Thomas Cranmer, whose position on eucharist issue seemed to waver. Cranmer's 1549 Prayer Book had implied a Catholic interpretation of the sacrament, yet he disavowed that very position in his 1550 treatise, A Defence of the True and Catholic Doctrine of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ. (As we shall see in a moment, Cranmer's views did in fact evolve over

the years.) Gardiner accused Cranmer of something akin to mere memorialism, and his case is strong (Davies 90-94).

Cranmer was by no means alone in his Zwinglian leanings. The title of John Firth's 1533 book A booke made by Iohn Firth prisoner in the tower of London is indicative of the fates met by those who denied Real Presence prior to 1534. As quoted by Davies, Firth argues, "It is not his presence in the bread that can save me, but his presence in my hart through faith in his blood, which hath washed out my sinnes and pacified ye fathers wrath toward me" (95). According to Firth, the reasons for instituting a sacrament were sociological and pedagogical, because "they that have received these blessed tydinges and worde of health, do love to publishe this felicitie unto other men" (96). Even though Firth never pursued the lines of own his argument through to the corollary diminution of the role of the priesthood, he was nevertheless executed in 1533.

Notable among the Zwinglians of the post-1534 period is John Hooper, who declared in his 1551 A Godly Confession and Protestation of the Christian Faith that the idea that a man could be saved by the sacraments "doth derogate the mercy of God" (100). He too saw the chief values of the eucharist as commemorative and sociological in that it brought together the

community of believers for the purpose of worship. Naturally, these views did not play well after the accession of Mary in 1553. Hooper was imprisoned that same year, tried for heresy two years later and, refusing to recant, excommunicated and burnt at the stake.

Between the extreme positions of Real (bodily) Presence, whether by trans- or consubstantiation, and "Real Absence," as the memorialist view is sometimes labeled (Davies 82), it is typical that the Church of England should gravitate towards Calvin's virtualist compromise.

Early evidence of the Calvinist alternative appears in Nicholas Ridley's 1544 treatise A Brief Declaration of the Lord's Supper. Ridley maintained that the entire eucharistic controversy hinged upon a single question: "What is the matter of the Sacrament: Whether is it the natural substance of the bread, or the natural substance of Christ's own body?" (104). Ridley's answer was to deny the presence of Christ's in his human and assumed nature, but to allow Christ's presence in the real manifestation of divine grace. The analogy Ridley uses is the sun: like Christ's human nature, the sun resides physically in heaven, yet it is simultaneously present below, manifest in

his beams, light and natural influence, where it shineth upon the earth. For God's Word and his Sacraments be, as it were, the beams of Christ, which is Sol iustitiae, the Sun of righteousness. (Davies 105)

Ridley also has the distinction of being the first Protestant bishop in England to substitute Communion tables for altars in his diocese. His reasoning is straightforward:

For the use of an altar is to make sacrifice upon it; the use of a table is to serve for men to eat upon. Now, when we come to the Lord's board, what do we come for? to sacrifice Christ again, and to crucify him again, or to feed upon him that was once only crucified and offered up for us? If we come to feed upon him, spiritually to eat his body, and spiritually to eat his blood (which is the true use of the Lord's Supper), then no man can deny but the form of a table is more meet for the Lord's board, than the form of an altar. (106)

This interpretation was to exert a considerable influence upon Cranmer as he wrestled with the issue. Prior even to the first edition of the Prayer Book in 1549, he consulted the foremost Protestant scholars of Europe. Among the dozen theologians he summoned to England in 1547 and 1548, Martin Bucer seemed to hold the most sway. Bucer had succeeded Zwingli as the leader of the Reformed Churches in Switzerland and southern Germany, where he had evinced a strong (though unsuccessful) desire to unite the Protestant sects of the region. This must have

appealed to Cranmer, who sought the greatest unity that could be achieved in England. Bucer's position on the eucharist, as summarized by Davies, is that "as the body eats the bread and drinks the wine, so does the soul eat the spiritual body of Christ, the soul's true bread, and that this spiritual presence of Christ is vivifying and hallowing, to eternal life" (108).

Ridley and Bucer were instrumental in the formulation of Cranmer's own position on the eucharist, although exactly what that position ended up remains somewhat in dispute.¹¹ What is apparent is that Cranmer changed his mind at least twice on the subject. He certainly migrated from transubstantiation (as noted by his contemporary, Gardiner) to consubstantiation (as indicated in a letter of August 15, 1538 in which he comes to the defense of Adam Damply, who had denied transubstantiation but also affirmed real presence) and wound up somewhere in the vicinity of either memorialism or virtualism (Davies 111-112). In making a convincing case for the latter, Davies points out

¹¹ As noted by Davies, scholars of the eucharistic debate are split on whether Cranmer ended up as a Zwinglian-memorialist or a Calvinist-virtualist. The former case is argued by Cyril C. Richardson (Zwingli and Cranmer on the Eucharist: Cranmer dixit et contradixit. Evanston, Ill.: 1949.) and Gregory Dix (The Shape of the Liturgy. 1949.); the latter case is argued by Peter Brooks (Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine of the Eucharist. 1965.), by C.W. Dugmore (The Mass and the English Reformers. 1958.), and by Davies himself.

that Calvin would have agreed "with Cranmer's claim that as the bread and wine feed the body of the believer, so does the spiritual presence of Christ feed the soul of the believer" (184). Yet the second edition of Cranmer's Prayer Book (1552) contained the so-called "black rubric" which excluded "anye reall and essencial presence there beeyng of Christ's natural fleshe and bloude" (ibid.). Whether this constitutes a slide towards memorialism, or whether Calvin even approved of this last-minute emendation is not clear. Given the ambiguities, Davies' conclusion on the matter seems fair-minded:

. . . there is no need to describe Cranmer as a crypto-Zwinglian hiding behind a quasi-Catholic mask of language, for his was a mediating, not an iconoclastic, position. Possibly Cranmer was inconsistent, even confused. It may be that he was groping toward a clearer expression of his sacramental theology. He may even have been adumbrating a mediating position which tried to conserve the Catholic value of the Eucharist, while abandoning its anachronistic metaphysical underpinnings. But he was assuredly not an eminence grise, nor was he an archiepiscopal Rasputin at Edward's court, however intriguing such a hypothesis may be. (185)

Hooker, thus, as the principal apologist for the Prayer Book, arrives in the wake of a half century of English eucharistic polemics. As John Booty notes in his introduction to Book V of the Laws:

Because of the likeness of the Eucharist to the Roman Mass, it was the Holy Communion that seemed most superstitious. Hooker was of necessity bound to focus his attention on it and the other sacraments as well. (Booby 4)

Fortunately for Hooker, the black rubric had been excised from the Elizabethan edition of 1559, and the official position of the Church of England clarified somewhat by the twenty-eighth of the Thirty-Nine articles of 1571: "The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the means whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is faith" (BCP 608). Here was an instance where following Thomas was simply not a viable option: transubstantiation was clearly not the party line.¹² Consubstantiation was ruled out as well, though it is doubtful if Hooker could have entertained the irrational implications of the doctrine regardless. Consuubstantiation, at least by

¹² Hooker's abandonment of Saint Thomas is interesting here in that it indicates that he did not regard Thomas as flawless. His willingness to part with Thomism in this instance may be viewed: (generously) as evidence of his primary allegiance to the truth; (dubiously) as evidence of his primary allegiance to the 39 Articles; or (chauvinistically) as evidence that the two are the same. Regardless, it is strategic enough to call into question Hooker's use of Thomas in the first place--does he follow Thomas out of conviction or convenience? Does he, for example, insist upon Thomas's concept of a rational God because he recognizes the necessity of the concept to counter the puritan case? Or does he genuinely believe that Thomas is right?

Luther's own formulation, is an illogical concept: it violates the principle of identity; two substances come to occupy the same space; the bread and wine are simultaneously two things--each is what it was not. Since, as Booty comments, Hooker's technique is to demonstrate "the compatability of these duties with necessary first principles" (7), he could hardly be expected to embrace a doctrine which seemed to require nature "to intermit her course" (1.3.2).

Virtualism, by contrast, attempted to make some sense out of the act. Clearly the preferred interpretation, as indicated by the twenty-eighth article, it weds only the spiritual efficacy of Christ's sacrifice to the physical substances of bread and wine--thus two physical substances need not inhere simultaneously.¹³

Yet if Hooker must be classified as a virtualist, he is not so without certain problems of his own. His presentation of the eucharist question is punctuated with apparent missteps and out-of-character logical disclaimers. Remarking, at the

¹³ It is rather similar, in this respect, to the Incarnation itself. Christ is really two natures at once: divine and human. His corporeal human nature is wed to his spiritual divine nature. This is quite different from holding that a thing can be two physical substances simultaneously--for such substances by definition occupy space.

outset of his discussion, that "the holie Eucharist doth not begin but continue life" (5.67.1), Hooker declares:

Such as will live the life of god must eate the fleshe and drinke the blood of the Sonne of man, because this is parte of that diet which if wee wante wee cannot live. (ibid.)

This would seem to dismiss out of hand Calvin's contention of the historical perfection of Christ's one sacrifice upon the cross. When he states that "if wee wante" (i.e., lack) the eucharist meal, "we cannot live," he makes the eucharist necessary for salvation; he is holding to precisely the view which Calvin so vociferously rejects, namely, that the redemption which Christ gained for us is conditional, that it can be forfeited without communion. Yet Hooker follows this with an affirmation of Real Presence that seems very much in line with Calvin's belief in the spiritual efficacy of the sacrament:

. . . wee understande that the strengthe of oure life begun in Christe is Christe, that his fleshe is meate, and his blood drink, not by surmised imagination but trulye, even so trulie that throughe faith we perceive in the bodie and bloode sacramentallye presented the verye taste of eternall life, the grace of the sacramente is here as the food which wee eate and drinke. (ibid.)

It is "grace," therefore, that we perceive "in the bodie and bloode sacramentallie presented." And if by "grace" we understand the spiritual efficacy of Christ's sacrifice, then Hooker falls in line as a virtualist. Rather than the reality of Christ's body and blood in the eucharist, it is the divine grace inherent in the body and blood--subject always to the worthiness of the receiver--that is the key to the sacrament. But Hooker, here, has also stumbled upon a paradox. In making the sacrament necessary for eternal life, which "if wee wante wee cannot live" (5.67.1), he seemingly undermines the finality of Christ's sacrifice--and thus the very spiritual efficacy that he must affirm as the Real Presence of the sacrament. It is not surprising then that Hooker follows quickly with the first of his disclaimers:

All thinges considered and compared with that successe, which truthe hath hitherto had, by so bitter conflictes with errours in this point, shall I wishe that men would more give them selves to meditate with silence what we have by the sacrament, and less to dispute of the manner how?
(5.67.3)

If the intellectual resignation is out-of-character in these lines, Hooker is preparing to go a step farther. What follows is probably the most anti-intellectual passage in all of the Lawes:

Curious and intricate speculations doe hinder, they abate, they quench such inflamed motions of delight and joy as divine graces use to raise when extraordinarily they are present. The minde therefore feelinge present joy is allwaies mervelous unwilling to admitt anie other cogitation, and in that case casteth of those disputes whereunto the intellectuall parte at other times easilie draweth. (ibid.)

Even if it is true that "curious and intricate speculations" serve in the end to "hinder" and "abate" the delight of the mind in the face of the miraculous, it is nonetheless also the case that the rational mind dismisses outright that which is contrary to reason. The question that lurks in the background of the consubstantiation-transubstantiation-virtualism polemic is not so much how the miraculous alteration of the eucharist is effected (the agency is divine omnipotence), but whether such an alteration can be accounted for in a rational sense. Luther is willing to render up the principles of reason in order to preserve Christ's real participation amidst the bread and wine; Thomas seeks to account for the same participation in terms of the rational distinction between substance and accident; Calvin wants to render the question moot by his insistence that what the receiver receives is spiritual rather than physical. The "delight" to which Hooker refers above is surely never in jeopardy any of these instances, since the

"divine graces" which effect the miracle are not themselves under scrutiny.

These disclaimers, of course, do not prevent Hooker from an affirmation of virtualism, as sketched in the Twenty-Eighth article, as well as affirmed by the Prayer Book. For as Booty points out, "The most straightforward interpretation of Book V is to view it as a defense of the Book of Common Prayer" (2). Hooker must, in this instance, finally fall in line with Calvin: "The reall presence of Christes most blessed bodie and bloode is not therefore to be sought for in the sacrament, but in the worthie receiver of the sacrament" (5.67.6). As he locates the efficacy of the sacrament with the receiver, rather than with the consecrated elements of bread and wine, Hooker embraces Calvin's idea of spiritual Real Presence. He has no alternative. Corporeal Real Presence, within the receiver, would simply postpone the moment of trans- or consubstantiation; the substance of Christ's body and blood would still have to exist either instead of or under the

substance of the bread and wine in the receiver.¹⁴ Thus
Hooker's virtualism is inevitable:

As for the sacramentes they reallie exhibit, but
for ought wee can gather out of that which is
written of them they are not reallie nor do
reallie containe in them selves that grace which
with them or by them it pleseth God to bestowe. .
. . The fruite of the Eucharist is the
participation of the bodie and blood of Christ.
There is no sentence of holie scripture which
saith that wee cannot by this sacrament be made
pertakers of his bodie and bloode except they be
first contained in the sacrament or the sacrament
converted into them. (ibid.)

Hooker denies that the substances of bread and wine need to be
altered, either by consubstantiation or transubstantiation,
prior to their being received. No scriptural evidence exists,
he argues, to suggest that the conversion of the elements must
take place outside the body of the receiver. Stated negatively
here, Hooker's own position is framed in a more definitive and
certainly more positive way--as though from the mouth of Jesus
himself--in the following passage:

¹⁴ Having questioned his motives earlier, it is tempting to
speculate that Hooker, in his heart of hearts, might have
wanted (with a nod towards Saint Thomas) to posit a kind of
internal transubstantiation, accomplished not through the
consecration of the elements by the priest but through the
faith of the receiver. It is worth noting that his first
disclaimer (5.67.3) follows on the heels of his first mention
of transubstantiation (5.67.2). Is this evidence of a desire
not to repudiate the belief entirely, but merely to relocate
it?

This hallowed foode, through concurrence of divine power, is in veritie and truth, unto faithfull receivers, instrumentallie a cause of that mysticall participation, whereby as I make my selfe whollie theirs, so I give them in hande an actuall possession . . . all such saving grace as my sacrificed bodie can yeeld, and as theire soules do presently need, this is 'to them and in them' my bodie . . . (5.67.12)

As Booty remarks in his commentary on the passage, this is not only Hooker's position, but also "that of the Church of England as he understands it." That, for once, Hooker's understanding of the English Church's position was, in his own mind, perhaps not quite clear, is one possible explanation for his final disclaimer, taken from Arnold of Bonneval's De Coena Domini, which follows shortly thereafter:

what these elementes are in them selves it skilleth not, it is enough that to me which take them they are the bodie and blood of Christ, his promise in witnes hereof sufficeth, his word he knoweth which way to accomplish, why should any cogitation possesse the minde of a faithfull communicant but this, O my God thou art true, O my soule thou art happie? (5.67.12)

Of course, Hooker realizes that the issue is critical, that it will not go away. For Calvin, the fact that it is the faith of the receiver, rather than the consecration by the priest, that renders the sacrament valid, is central to his denial of the

intermediary function of the priest--and, through him, the interposition between God and man of the church. Hooker's dance around this corollary issue, especially in light of his repeated and uncharacteristic disclaimers, strikes me as tactical. He is caught between a rock and two hard places. If he sides unequivocally with Calvin, then the intermediary role of the church, and perhaps the episcopacy as well, is severely undermined. He cannot side with Thomas, not only because that is clearly not the position of the Church of England, but also because the act of consecration, by which the elements of bread and wine are transubstantiated, elevates the role of the church to the level of Rome. And siding with Luther is out of the question, for the doctrine of consubstantiation violates the first principles of reason themselves; if God can perform that, if He can defy the rules of being as He pleases and not unmake His creation, then in effect He has become the God of volition rather than the God of reason. Only by invoking a rational God is Hooker able to defend the universality of the first principles of reason, the correspondence theory of truth, and in the end the concept of a lex aeterna. As he considers the eucharist controversy, therefore, Hooker is indeed treading on dangerous ground.

CHAPTER V: GRACE-REDEEMED NATURE

Much like the relationship between reason and faith, the relationship between nature and grace is for Hooker a complex and yet essential one. He could hardly avoid the issue. As Robert Faulkner remarks, "Hooker thought the mistaking of the proper relation of nature and grace the chief cause of those disputes which troubled his church" (55). Within the domain of nature, it was generally agreed by conformists and puritans alike that human reason had at least a utilitarian function. On a mundane level, the fact was that logic seemed to work. And it was also generally conceded among conformists as well as puritans that salvation was unavailable without the aid of divine grace. Since Christians resided within the realm of nature, human reason was necessary for survival. Since they

also aspired to heaven, however, their receptivity to grace had to be preserved. Thus the relative weights allotted nature and grace must mirror the balance struck within the soul of every Christian between survival and salvation.

And it is here that conformist and puritan part company.
For the puritans:

The discriminatory power of natural reason lost all significance. Nature and the kingdom of grace were considered according to Luther's maxim mundus inimicus Dei, two antagonistic forces. And once grace had triumphed, it abolished and supplanted every natural inclination and faculty; gratia tollit naturam--that was the final quintessence of Puritanism. (Munz 38)

While the puritans supposed an antagonism between nature and grace, the coherence of the conformist case rested heavily on their assumption, "inherited from the middle ages, that grace completes nature" (Davies 64-65). Here is yet another instance where a clash of premises determined the irreconcilable lines of the debate. As human reason scrutinized the relationship between nature and grace, the very propriety of that scrutiny itself came to be scrutinized. Where the puritans saw the sin of pride, the conformists saw the exercise of created nature. Where the puritans saw a hopeless disjunction, the conformists saw continuity. Speaking of natural reason, Cartwright will

assert "It hath some small force in humaine sciences" but "in divine matters hath no force at all" (cited by Hooker 2.7.4). To which the conformist Hooker replies that supernatural and natural elements work together towards man's salvation:

The unsufficiencie of the light of nature is by the light of scripture so fully and so perfectly herein supplied, that further light then this hath added there doth not neede unto that ende. (2.8.3)

The interdependence between God's grace, as manifest in His revealed word, and created nature, as manifest in human reason, is offered by Hooker as a hermeneutical principle; for the corollary of the interdependent realms Hooker posits is the idea that where scripture is silent, reason can and should come to the fore. From this follows the justification, on the grounds of their innate reasonableness, of the customs evolved over the generations by the English Church--even those customs that have no biblical sanction.

It should come as no surprise that the puritan response to the Lawes, A Christian Letter, should take Hooker to task for just the passage cited above:

Heere we pray you to explaine your owne meaning, whether you thinke that there be anie naturall light, teaching knowledge of things necessarie to salvation, which knowledge is not contayned in holy scripture. If you thinke, no: how then say

you before: Not the scripture severallie, but
 nature and scripture jointlie, be compleate unto
 everlasting felicity? (CL Vol.4 p.11)

Where Hooker intends to suggest a continuum, the puritans read a usurpation of scriptural authority by natural reason. It is Hooker's contention that, "the testimonies of God are all sufficient unto that end for which they were given" (2.8.5). But, he maintains, "that end" for which the scriptures are provided is to supplement what a man can discern by means of his natural capacities; thus the two realms, natural and supernatural, far from being inimical, work in conjunction towards salvation. The author of A Christian Letter, however, sees their mutual dependence as implying an imperfection in the supernatural realm. For the puritans, "that end" for which the scriptures have been provided is to serve as the locus for faith--and it is that grace-inspired faith, in turn, that saves. Reason is required simply to get by in the natural world.

How appalling such a view must have seemed to Hooker. To restrict the application of human reason to secular matters is to deny to reason its crowning purpose; and that purpose is to advance the soul towards salvation. Man's natural intellectual capacities not only empowered him within the realm of nature,

they delivered him to the threshold of grace, to the rational submission of the intellect before the transcendent mysteries of scripture. It was grace that underwrote that submission, grace that righted reason so that the individual's soul might be saved. Thus, for Hooker:

The realms of nature and of grace were as distinct as night and day, life and death, yet in the human soul they shared a common border. Revelation extended and completed man's natural vision; grace oriented and guaranteed the very contingencies of the world in which man lived. God's goodness was without qualification or mitigation, and in God's will there was neither ambiguity nor contradiction. Thus the universe he created for man was not morally neutral; the forces of good and evil were not equally weighted; obscurity or ambivalence would never prevail. As a consequence, sin had no metaphysical validity: it was wholly negative, privative; it began in self-denial and ended in self-defeat. (Hill 185)

The "self-denial" that begins sin, in Hooker, is the denial of the moral efficacy of human reason. The fact that "there was neither ambiguity nor contradiction" within God will reflects the conformist belief that He is a rational God, that His will corresponds on an essential level with the first principles of human reason, that God Himself cannot create a contradiction, violate an identity, etc. Reason is thus justified as a tool with which to approach the supernatural problem of salvation. Reason cannot save by itself, to be sure. But to ascribe to

reason an antagonistic role is to presuppose an opposition between fallen nature and divine grace, as in Luther's "mundus inimicus Dei." This is, at last, to give sin a "metaphysical validity," to regard evil as a positive force rather than a privation, a kind of demi-urge that operates against God's grace. Yet, as Lake notes: "Throughout the Polity, Hooker's emphasis had been on the compatability between nature and grace" (182). Reason, righted by supernatural grace and operational within the realm of nature, is able to discern adumbrations of the lex aeterna in the proper conduct of human lives; right reason accounts what ought to be done and also surmises the means by which to accomplish the particular end. It is the further role of grace then to empower reason, to strengthen its mandate. For Hooker, righteousness is also a rational objective--apart from the mandates of scripture.

Here again we are returned to the fundamentally opposing world-views of Hooker and Calvin. The pessimism of the latter manifests itself in the belief that post-lapsarian man cannot have his reason righted; he is incapable of righteousness of his own accord; when he does well, when he acts morally, it is only by faith which is actuated through the divine agencies of the grace. Though Hooker concedes the vitiation of man's moral capacities after the Fall, he nevertheless holds that reason

and moral rectitude remain compatible; the proper exercise of reason, moreover, directs man towards that same righteousness in which God has clothed salvation.

Yet Hooker is careful to sidestep the Pelagianism towards which he seems headed. As we saw in the previous chapter, he does not exclude the participation of the Holy Spirit in good works. Rather, it is through the unfathomable grace of the Holy Spirit that reason has been reconciled with the will of God. It is only then that reason becomes "right reason." As Egil Grisliis comments in his essay "The Hermeneutical Problem in Richard Hooker":

. . . the reason which Hooker places alongside with revelation is not the general capacity for thinking present in all men, but only the special kind of judicious reasoning present in all those who "are of God." By contrast, those who are not redeemed by grace possess only a perverted reason that cannot function properly. (178)

The key word is "properly." Reason functions on one level or another in all men; it is reason, indeed, by which men are classically differentiated from beasts. Man is a rational animal. If reason, unaided, were enough to sponsor good works, then men could by their nature become saints. Yet it is the case that reason is utilized for the very opposite of good works--it is utilized to practice and promote sin. Reason is

as adept at emptying the alms box as filling it. In the case where reason directs a man to sin, Hooker concludes, it functions improperly; it functions without the grace of the Holy Spirit. Where reason directs a man to virtue, to good works, to love and charity and responsible citizenship--where reason, in other words, directs a man to reverence for scriptural truth--it has been redeemed by grace. The Holy Spirit, in this case, has rectified reason and caused it to function properly.

Yet here once more we confront the problem of circularity in Hooker's thought. For the Holy Spirit is the purveyor not only of grace but also of the scriptures themselves. If the scriptures are to be taken as divinely inspired, then the Holy Spirit must have directed their creation. As human reason comes to recognize scriptural truth, the process grows incestuous: for the Spirit itself must redeem human reason in order for scriptural truth to be recognized. Scepticism, in this scenario, becomes a function of fallen reason, of reason functioning improperly.

Moreover, it is not merely biblical scepticism at issue here. For we must keep in mind that Hooker proposes reason as a confirmation of biblical authority: ". . . it is not the worde of God which doth or possiblief can assure us that we doe

well to thinke it his worde" (2.4.2). Hence, reason must come to support revelation in order for us even to ascertain that it is indeed revelation. What Hooker now seems to propose is that if reason should fail to validate revelation, then reason cannot be functioning properly. Thus the conclusion that the scriptures are valid must first be premised in order to validate reason--which in turn must validate the truth of the scriptures. The blatant circularity of this argument violates rational logic; it is another instance whereby the logos of the individual must be surrendered up in order to embrace the Logos of God.

Professor Grislis goes on to delineate Hooker's "three interrelated yet distinct levels" of reason redeemed by grace:

The first level consists of intuitive knowledge, whereby the first principles of reason are recognized as self-evidently true (2.7.5) . . . The second level of knowledge is established by "strong and invincible demonstration". . . Finally, where the first two levels have failed, there remains a third, the level of "greatest probability" which men prefer when more certain knowledge is not available (2.7.5). Thus while it is possible to discover truth through reason on all three levels, men's actual success is never as high as when they are dealing with Scripture as the source of truth. (Grislis 178)

But the question must then be asked: to which level does the authentication of the scriptures themselves belong? Certainly,

it is not a "first principle of reason"; nor even, I think, is the divine truth of the bible "established by 'strong and invincible demonstration.'" What remains is that affirmation of the scriptures is only accomplished on the third level, "the level of 'greatest probability.'" If, as Grislis suggests, "men's actual success is never as high as when they are dealing with Scripture as the source of truth," and if the affirmation of the scriptures consists only of third level knowledge, then men's "actual success" in fact never rises above the third level.

As Grislis himself points out:

Thus at no time is it possible to escape the problem of subjectivity. Although the approaches are not the same, whether we are dealing with reason or with Scripture, we always obtain truth discursively, and the possibility of error cannot be ruled out in advance. To put it another way, Hooker recognizes that a mere appeal--be it to reason or to Scripture--does not automatically produce truth. There simply is no theological method, however correct, that can itself ensure its own infallibility. (Grislis 179)

In the absence of infallibility, we are left with a kind of inherent human scepticism, a natural measure of doubt, which accompanies every theological investigation--including Hooker's own. This does not imply that a rational man must also be a sceptic. Rather, a rational man must recognize that

his assent to a given scriptural truth amounts inevitably to a choice of the highest probability. The necessary participation of grace in the proper functioning of reason towards salvation thus rules out the possibility of retrospective certitude. Or, as Professor Grislis concludes:

Even when the best method is most judiciously employed, it yields, at the very best, only the highest probability that can be humanly achieved and is never beyond further debate. (ibid.)

It might well be argued, on the basis of this, that Hooker's recognition of the limitations of his own hermeneutical method renders him forever vulnerable to the dogmatic certitudes of Calvinism. Where Hooker's circumspect rationalism can yield truths defensible only at the level of highest probability, Calvin remains unhindered by such rational scruples. He can still continue to assert the unequivocal certainty with which the elect will recognize the truth of his own biblical interpretations.

Calvin is thus free to dismiss his opponents:

As regards the rank and file of the papists or Schoolmen, they are doubly deceived here both because they call faith an assurance of conscience in awaiting from God their reward for merits and because they interpret the grace of God not as the imputation of free righteousness but as the Spirit

helping in the pursuit of holiness. (Institutes
3.11.15)

Stricly speaking, there exists no rational basis by which Calvin's view of grace as "the imputation of free righteousness" should claim priority over the scholastic view of grace as "the Spirit helping in the pursuit of holiness." The issue is simply a clash of definitions, with each side able to cite scriptural passages to confirm its own. But where Hooker would be forced to concede that the question could never be resolved with certitude, only with highest probabilitly, Calvin simply asserts that the Schoolmen "are doubly deceived."

The onus of reason under which Hooker operates is weighty indeed. His methodology, in this sense, must be regarded as nothing less than heroic, given the vituperative quality of the debate in his time. Where opponents like Martin Marprelate are free to distort, to slander, or simply to ignore the case on behalf of the established English Church, Hooker is bound by his rational ethic to acknowledge, to dissect, and to assay the reformers' contentions. At the very least, his approach is going to more laborious. This much Hooker acknowledges in the very first chapter of Book I of the Lawes:

Albeit therefore much of that we are to speake in this present cause, may seeme to a number perhaps tedious, perhaps obscure, darke, and intricate, (for many talke of the truth, which never sounded the depth from whence it springeth, and therefore when they are led therunto they are soone wearie, as men drawne from those beaten pathes wherewith they have been inured) yet this may not so farre prevaile as to cut off that which the matter it selfe requireth, howsoever the nice humour of some be therewith pleased or no. (1.1.1)

Contrast the adjectives of Hooker's methodological disclaimer, "tedious," "obscure," "dark," "intricate," with the prospect of sudden illumination by the Holy Spirit promised in Calvin's scheme:

This, indeed, is that secret and hidden philosophy which cannot be wrested from syllogisms. But they whose eyes God has opened surely learn it by heart, that in his light they may see light. (Institutes 3.20.1)

The way to Calvin's truth is far from "tedious" and "darke." Rather, "they whose eyes God has opened" are led to it by God's own "light." When it comes to theological truth, Calvin would do away with syllogisms. But the syllogism is a sine-gua-non of rational method. From Hooker's point of view, no other method remains by which to settle theological disputes. This fundamental opposition, at the heart of the conformist-puritan conflict, may be glimpsed with reference to Hooker's

own metaphor: "many talke of the truth, which never sounded the depth from whence it springeth." This sounding of the depths of ecclesiastical truths is the purpose the Laves. Calvin's single answer, which undermines the entire edifice, is that reason cannot sound those depths, that when it attempts to do so it sins by excess pride, and that rational argumentation (in these instances) becomes the tool of Satan. Thus Calvin's position is essentially unassailable--since it is unanswerable to logical scrutiny.

It is not reason, according to Calvin, which permits a man to act righteously; it is, rather, the direct intevention of supernatural grace which sponsors good works. He describes the process in detail:

. . . to begin with, God deigns to embrace the sinner with his pure and freely given goodness, finding nothing in him except his miserble condition to prompt Him to mercy, since he sees man utterly void and bare of good works; and so he seeks in himself the reason to benefit man. Then God touches the sinner with a sense of his goodness in order that he, despairing of his works, may ground the whole of his salvation in God's mercy. This is the experience of faith through which the sinner comes into possession of his salvation when from the teaching of the gospel he acknowledges that he has been reconciled to God: that with Christ's righteousness interceding and forgiveness of sins accomplished he is justified. (Institutes 3.11.16)

As we have seen, Calvin holds that salvation has been gotten through Christ's sacrifice upon the cross. By this act, the elect have been saved, regardless of the presence or absence of their own good works. Good works, moreover, are impossible except by the direct intervention of grace. From our finite perspective, "good works" seem to abound; yet what seem to us good works are often prompted by ulterior motives--the tools of Satan. The man who contributes alms in order to win his salvation acts without grace; his motives are selfish rather than charitable. On the other hand, the man who is moved to contribute out of love, and not with an eye towards salvation, is the one whom "God touches." His charity is genuine, by virtue of grace, for he has come, "despairing of his own works," to "ground the whole of his salvation in God's mercy." The act of supernatural faith by which the man resigns his soul's destiny to the will of God is sponsored entirely by the Holy Spirit; it is an act which cannot be accomplished without grace.

It is grace, according to Calvin, by which the soul of an individual is reconciled with God. Nothing a man does, nothing a man thinks, justifies his worldly existence. Justification is by grace alone.

Of course, this idea did not originate with Calvin, but in Augustine, who in many ways is Calvin's spiritual father. Just as Hooker restated Thomism in order to defend the Church of England as established, the puritan followers of Calvin revived Augustinianism in order to tear it down.

In Chapter 30 of his Enchiridion, Augustine writes:

But this part of the human race to which God has promised pardon and a share in His eternal kingdom, can they be restored through the merit of their own works? God forbid. For what good work can a lost man perform, except so far as he has been delivered from perdition? Can they do anything by the free determination of their own will? Again I say, God forbid. For it was by the evil use of his free-will that man destroyed both it and himself. (Augustine 675)

The free will of man, Augustine argues, has been annihilated by the Fall of Adam. In the absence of free will, the idea salvation through good works becomes absurd; a man cannot earn heaven by his own good works when their performance is not his choice. Man is freed to perform good works only by the unmerited grace of the Holy Spirit:

But whence comes this liberty to do right to the man who is in bondage and sold under sin, except he be redeemed by Him who has said, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed?" And before this redemption is wrought in a man, when he is not yet free to do what is right, how can he talk of the freedom of his will and his good

works, except he be inflated by that foolish pride of boasting which the apostle restrains when he says, "By grace are ye saved, through faith." (ibid.)

The "liberty to do right" comes to post-lapsarian man only after he has been "redeemed." And he cannot, of course, redeem himself. His only access to redemption is through faith in the sacrifice of Christ. Yet Augustine adds in Chapter 31 that even faith itself is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Salvation is through faith, but it is by grace:

And lest men should arrogate to themselves the merit of their own faith at least, not understanding that this too is the gift of God, this same apostle, who says in another place that he had "obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful," here also adds: "and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." (ibid. 676)

Augustine's denial of man's capacity to redeem himself is absolute. Even the faith by which a man ultimately resigns his salvation to Christ is itself a product of the Holy Spirit. Without grace, that faith would be impotent. Human freedom, for Augustine, comes only after salvation has been accomplished through divine intercession:

We shall be made truly free, then, when God fashions us, that is, forms and creates us anew, not as men--for He has done that already--but as

good men, which His grace is now doing that we may be a new creation in Christ Jesus, according as it is said: "Create in me a clean heart, O God." For God had already created his heart, so far as the physical structure of the human heart is concerned; but the psalmist prays for the renewal of the life which was still lingering in his heart. (ibid.)

The theological line from Augustine through Calvin to the puritan reformers is direct and apparent. If a man cannot will himself to "do good," except by the grace of God, then no one is saved by his own good works; no one is saved, furthermore, except those for whom God has predestined the gift of grace. If a man is predestined to heaven or to hell, then the sacramental onus of the eucharist is lifted from him. Whether or not he receives, his bags are ticketed. It is Augustine's belief, however, that righteousness will manifest itself in the worldly lives of the elect--the peril of antinomianism is not admitted. He believes that a man who is predestined to be saved will be moved towards the fulfillment of the sacraments, and towards a Christian life in general. But it is the grace of the Holy Spirit which frees him to live in righteousness, to "do well." Righteousness simply cannot be had in the absence of grace: it cannot--and this is crucial--be willed rationally. Thus the puritans placed a much lower stock in rational method than conformists did--at least when it came to

determining the proper conduct of religious life. The fact that the chief puritan apologists then turned around and employed reason to promote their cause must have seemed, to Hooker at least, a egregious inconsistency. But once reason itself has been discounted from the realm of spiritual truth, the prospect of inconsistent reasoning on these issues ceases to matter.

Yet it is precisely reason that Hooker ties to the divine gift of grace--and therein lies an irreconcilable parting between the conformists and the puritans. For the conformists, the function of grace is not to supplant reason but to rectify it, to render it operational beyond the limited confines of the material world, to direct it towards supernatural truth and infinite good. Hooker's account of the relationship between reason and grace is virtually identical to that of Saint Thomas, and hence the via media of conformism swerves towards Rome on this particular issue. Thomas takes up the issue of the redemption of reason in the First Part of the Second Part of the Summa Theologica:

Now man's reason is perfected by God in two ways: first, with its natural perfection, namely,

the natural light of reason; secondly, with a supernatural perfection, namely, the theological virtues, as we have stated above. And, though this latter perfection is greater than the former, yet the former is possessed by man in a more perfect manner than the latter; because man has the former in his full possession, whereas he possesses the latter imperfectly, since we love and know God imperfectly. (ST 2a. Q68. Art.2)

Thomas argues that "man's reason is perfected by God" in two senses. It is permitted through grace to function properly within its own finite sphere, the material world; but it is also raised, by grace, to direct man towards salvation. Although reason is suited more perfectly by its nature to the exigencies of the material world, on an imperfect level grace-aided reason is able to discern righteousness--it is able, in other words, to lead men to "do good." For Thomas, a human being is not the passive recipient of eternal life; he becomes an active participant in the ongoing process of salvation, a seeker of wisdom and virtue. Unless he utilizes the gift of grace, unless he heeds his rectified reason, salvation is forfeited.

Thomas expands upon this idea in the same article:

Accordingly, in matters subject to human reason, and directed to man's connatural end, man can work through the judgement of his reason. If, however, even in these things man is aided by a special instigation from God, this will be out of

God's superabundant goodness. Hence, according to the philosophers, not every one that had the acquired moral virtues had also the heroic or divine virtues. But in matters directed to the supernatural last end, to which man's reason moves him according as it is, in a manner and imperfectly, informed by the theological virtues, the motion of reason does not suffice, unless it receive in addition the instigation or motion of the Holy Ghost . . . (ibid.)

Although a man's reason manages, to a certain degree, to point him towards "the supernatural last end," it cannot lead him the whole way; it can only take him as far as it has been "informed by the theological virtues"--which are faith, hope, and charity. These comprise the gifts of grace by which human reason is rectified, and reason functions rightly only when it directs the will towards virtue. Grace, then, underwrites the potency of right reason.

It is crucial to Hooker's defense to establish the fellowship, rather than the antipathy, of natural reason and supernatural grace. For the puritans, without exception, invoked the Holy Spirit as the sponsor of their scriptural interpretations. In order for Hooker to challenge these interpretations, he had to subject them to rational scrutiny--he had to presuppose, therefore, that the operations of grace were at least analogous to the principles of reason. Thus in

the preface to the Laves, Hooker lays out the puritan contention:

From hence they proceede to a higher point, which is the perswading of men credulous and over capable of such pleasing errors, that it is the speciall illumination of the holy Ghost, whereby they discern those things in the word, which others reading yet discern them not. (Pref.3.10)

Where reason proved incompatible with their interpretations of scripture, the puritans claimed "the speciall illumination of the holy Ghost." By this method, they accomplished two purposes. First, they were able to fend off rational critiques of their readings, for in their view reason could not and should not contend with grace. Second, they were able to further underscore the intellectual and spiritual breach between the elect and the remainder of the people, between those who "discerne" the puritan scriptural truths and those who "discerne them not." Thus their idiosyncratic readings became by implication a kind of litmus for the salvation of the individual. If the rational methodology of such a position is dubious, the psychology is brilliant.

To answer this, Hooker cites the First Epistle of Saint John: "Dearely beloved saith S. John, Give not credit unto every Spirite" (ibid.). The scriptural citation is especially

crucial here for Hooker, in order that his case should be perceived as against the puritans rather than against the Holy Spirit. As he invokes John in support of the rational argument he is about to undertake, he tacitly acknowledges the divine origin of the bible; he gathers the Holy Spirit itself, as it were, into the cause of reason. Indeed, the very verse Hooker cites concludes with these words: ". . . believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John.4.1). By implication, then, Hooker seems to align the puritan apologists with false prophets. Yet if we read further in the epistle, we find that it is Hooker, in fact, who has quoted out of context:

Hereby know ye the spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.

And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of the anti christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. (1 John.4.2-3)

The full meaning of the passage Hooker cites is, then, very different from the use to which he puts it. John not only warns his readers not to give credence to every spirit, he provides a specific test whereby a spirit may be judged "of

God" or "not of God." And by John's own test, the "spirit" invoked by the puritans certainly qualified as "of God"--since no puritan ever denied that Jesus Christ had come "in the flesh."

Regardless, Hooker proceeds against the puritan argument with a brief explication of the workings of the Holy Spirit:

There are but two waies whereby the spirit leadeth men into all truth: the one extraordinarie, the other common; the one belonging but unto some few, the other extending it selfe unto all that are of God; the one that which we call by a speciall divine excellency Revelation, the other Reason.
(Pref.3.10)

The Holy Spirit, according to Hooker, leads men "into all truth." And since truth, for Hooker, is the correspondence between thought and reality, it is grace which allows for this correspondence. But grace leads men to truth in two ways. The first, and most obvious, way is through revelation--the Holy Spirit, for Christians of every denomination, is the author of all legitimate revelation. But Hooker then extends the workings of grace--and this is where he and the puritans would part company--to the everyday rational functionings of the mind. He makes the Holy Spirit also the sponsor of right reason.

What is at issue here, ultimately, are two conflicting definitions of "reality." Both sides of the debate, conformist and puritan, agree that when the mind comes into correspondence with reality it is the doing of the Holy Spirit, that the correspondence is an instance of grace. But in the case of the puritans, reality is equated with the eternal aspect of existence. The material universe, for them, is but a flume through which sinful souls are passing on their journeys towards either salvation or damnation; the end points constitute the absolute realities of life. As a result of this outlook, the puritans are led to denigrate reason as a mere tool of the material world. Reason is handy to have around for the present, but its correspondence to the eternal reality of God is nil. To assign logical reason to the workings of the Holy Spirit, then, is to degrade the Spirit--whose function is to conduct the elect among men towards salvation.

But for the conformists, and for Hooker, their apologist, reality comprises both the material and divine realms. Indeed, the God of reason assures that the two form the continuum of being, that the first principles of the former are at least scaled to the eternal existence of the latter. From the conformist view, grace sponsors not only the occasional mystical correspondence between the human mind and the divine

realm--revelation--but also the more mundane correspondence between the human mind of the material realm--reason. If indeed the Holy Spirit deigns now and then to reveal the infinite in finite terms, on a more constant basis it also sustains the uniformity of finitude. It is only that uniformity which makes reason itself possible.

Thus Hooker's ensuing challenge to the puritans must fall inevitably upon deaf ears:

If the Spirite by such revelation have discovered unto them the secrets of that discipline out of Scripture, they must professe themselves to be all (even men, women, and children) Prophets. Or if reason be the hand which the Spirite hath led them by, for as much as perswasions grounded upon reason are either weaker or stronger according to the force of those reasons whereupon the same are grounded, they must every of them from the greatest to the least be able for every severall article to shewe some special reason as strong as their perswasion is earnest. (ibid.)

Hooker regards with ironic scepticism the notion that the puritans "must professe themselves to be all . . . prophets," but in point of fact the puritan conviction of their own status as the elect conferred a kind of prophetic mantle upon each individual--the so-called "priesthood of all believers." It was every man's responsibility to seek out the truth in the Word of God; the Elect were simply the ones to whom the Holy

Spirit made the truth manifest. The truth, naturally, happened to be the puritan truth--in essence the truth of Calvin, seen always of course as truly biblical. But that truth also happened to come apart at several key points under rational scrutiny. (That is why Hooker wrote the Laws in the first place.) Yet for the puritan apologist, a rational critique of his own position was beside the point. The direct involvement of the Spirit raised the puritan case beyond the syllogistic quibblings of an uninspired human intellect.

Thus Hooker's conclusion about the affirmation of grace through reason signals, as early as his Preface, what is to be the ultimate epistemological circularity of the Laws:

It is not therefore the fervent earnestnes of their perswasion, but the soundnes of those reasons whereupon the same is built, which must declare their opinions in these things to have bene wrought by the holie Ghost . . . (ibid.)

Hooker's conception of the Holy Ghost is as an aspect of the rational godhead who becomes subject to logical verification; since God wrought the lex aeterna by which He himself must operate, reason and revelation must never cease to complement each other. It is from this epistemological stance that reason becomes a necessary ground for the knowledge of revelation,

that the logical "soundnes" of a "perswasion" serves as its theological seal.

The uncharacteristic scorn with which he supplies the puritan response to these criticisms is an indication that, even as early as his Preface, Hooker recognized that at a fundamental level the puritan position would always remain irrefutable:

Shew these egerlie affected men their inhabilitie to judge of such matters; their answe is God hath chosen the simple. Convince them of follie, and that so plainely that verie children upbraid them with it; they have their bucklers of like defence. Christs owne Apostle was accompted mad. The best men evermore by the sentence of the world have bene judged to be out of their right minds.
(Pref.3.14)

In the Lawes, Hooker sets for himself the unenviable task of winning over, by rational means, an intractable opposition which is prepared to abandon reason itself when it ceases to serve their purposes. It is a Sisyphean task, to be sure. He is trying to checkmate an opponent who will not play by the rules. Hooker's own insistence upon those rules, under these circumstances, constitutes a heroic determination not to concede the logical futility of his position. If in the final analysis his argument is circular, it could not have been otherwise and still retain its rational high ground.

VI. AFTERWORD: NOTES ON RECENT HOOKER SCHOLARSHIP

The forthcoming fifth and sixth volumes of the Folger Library edition of the works of Richard Hooker, edited by W. Speed Hill, and cited in manuscript form throughout this dissertation, will hopefully signal a renaissance in Hooker scholarship as we approach the 400th anniversary of the publication of the first four books of the Lawes in 1993. Volume 5 will comprise Hooker's sermons and tractates; Volume 6 will comprise introductions and commentaries to the books of the Lawes. The easy availability of such materials promises to make Hooker more accessible to the general reader, and also to highlight Hooker's centrality to religious, philosophical and political thought of the Elizabethan period. Although it is a bit premature to declare the onset of "Hookermania," the

Folger edition represents a landmark in the Hooker scholarship and should spawn a geometric increase in criticism of a major writer.

I have argued in the foregoing pages that Hooker's system is necessarily circular, that his utilization of the Thomistic synthesis, in particular Saint Thomas's concept of a rational God, must be construed as an act of supernatural faith rather than natural reason; and I have also argued that the remainder of Hooker's defense ensues from his initial decision to follow Thomas. The question of Hooker's logical circularity has not, as far as I can tell, been addressed until now.

What has been addressed on numerous occasions is Hooker's logical consistency. (Although logical consistency and logical circularity are related, they are not identical. The former concerns the compatibility of conclusions with premises; the latter concedes the issue of compatibility but asks whether the conclusions are inherent in the premises and if the premises themselves are beyond reproach.) Thus, the criticism that has addressed Hooker's consistency will bear greatly upon my work insofar as his premises and conclusions are delineated, but the divergence in intentions will be manifest in the lines of argument taken.

The two works, cited earlier, which most critically bear upon my thesis are the 1952 book, The Place of Hooker in the History of Thought by Peter Munz, and the reply twenty years later to that book by W.D.J. Cargill Thompson in an essay entitled "The Philosopher of the 'Politic Society'." Both of these deal with the subject of Hooker's overall consistency, Munz arguing against and Cargill Thompson arguing for. The sentiment among Hooker scholars seems to be that the question is settled in favor of Cargill Thompson, upholding Hooker's consistency.

The thesis of Munz's book is that Hooker's defense of the autonomy of reason in the end logically obviated the Christian elements of the Tudor Constitution--a conclusion which Hooker, of course, could not tolerate. He was therefore forced to shift his position, subtly but inevitably, which in Munz's estimation accounts for the unfinished later books of the Laws. According to Munz, Hooker's troubles began when he lost sight of the basic Thomistic distinction between the proper spheres of natural reason and faith; faith must supplement reason in those areas to which reason has not access. This parallels the supplementation of natural law by divine revelation. Where reason leaves off, God has revealed his word to ferry us the rest of the way towards salvation. The proper

sphere of reason is nature, of faith, supernature. Hooker, however, overextended the sphere of reason. This is somewhat understandable since the puritans argued against the spiritual efficacy of reason altogether. But by the time Hooker turned his attention to the Tudor Constitution,

he discovered that his theory of the nature and use of reason could be interpreted in a very generous fashion. There was nothing in it that would prevent him from looking upon the dictates of reason as the direct commands of God, and thus from excluding, at least, for all practical purposes, God from the government of society. (59)

This idea, of course, would have been repugnant to Hooker, who believed that the role of society was to ensure an environment in which an individual was able not only to live, but to live well. To live well, Hooker believed, a man must act on behalf of his own immortal soul, and in accordance with its ultimate salvation--a society which does not attend to the needs of individual salvation is an evil society. If valid, therefore, Munz's charge is deadly to Hooker's aims.

By no means, however, is Munz unsympathetic to Hooker's undertaking, even if in the end he questions its success. Among the factors working against Hooker, according to Munz, was a narrowing of the meaning of reason. For Hooker, steeped in the Scholastic tradition of the Middle Ages, reason implied

both a discursive and an intuitive element. The discursive element encompasses the processes of logic themselves, of observation and inference, of premise and conclusion. The intuitive element involves self-evident propositions, such as "Do good and avoid evil " Is such a statement dictated by reason, or by faith? If it is in fact reasonable, it is not arrived at through the application of proper logic. It must be implicitly, intuitively understood. It must be axiomatic, to borrow the mathematical term. The affirmation of axiomatic truth, to Hooker's way of thinking, was simply a function of the intuitive aspect of reason. But for the puritans, who recognized no such intuitive aspect, the affirmation was irrational, a matter of faith: "To the Puritan, such irrationality, being the antithesis of human reason, was likely to be of a divine nature" (64). Hence while Hooker deemed reason wholly self-sufficient within its proper realm of nature, the puritans found flaws in the epistemological base. Divine enlightenment, for them, was required to witness even the most fundamentally logical principles. So it is no wonder that the puritans justified their own idiosyncratic readings of scripture as underwritten by divine enlightenment, regardless of their intellectual training.

W.D.J. Cargill Thompson, in his 1972 essay, "The Philosopher of the 'Politic Society'," summarizes Munz's assessment of Hooker as follows:

According to Munz, it was Hooker's tragedy that he set out with the aim of expounding a theory of church and state based upon the principles of Aquinas but was unable to reconcile these principles with the realities of the Tudor political situation. As a result, he was forced imperceptibly to shift his ground, and when he came to justify the Royal Supremacy in Book VIII, he found himself increasingly tending to adopt the political arguments of Marsilius of Padua, with their Averroistic implication that the state was a purely secular institution. Munz suggests that it was Hooker's failure to reconcile these two opposing tendencies in his thought that accounts for the incomplete state of the last three books, for as the work progressed he became increasingly aware of the inconsistencies of his own position . . . (Cargill Thompson 10)

Along with those of Munz, Cargill Thompson also sets the objections of H. F. Kearney. Again, as summarized by Cargill Thompson, Kearney contends that there is a

. . . fundamental inconsistency in his [Hooker's] argument arising from his failure to reconcile the dichotomy between a "rationalist" and a "voluntarist" conception of law. According to Kearney, although Hooker started off by discussing law in terms of reason, like Saint Thomas, he ended by virtually identifying it with the will of the crown, like Marsilius and Thomas Hobbes. (Cargill Thompson 10)

Kearney's charge is a serious one, since Hooker himself mentions early in the first book of the Laws that he intends his work as a coherent whole, "that every former part might give strength unto all that follow, and every later bring some light unto all before" (1.1.2). What Kearney calls into question, in essence, is whether or not the conclusions about the nature of church polity and societal rule arrived at in the later books are inherent in, or even consistent with, the delineation of natural law in the earlier books. If his conclusions do not follow from his premises, then Hooker's work must be considered a failure, raised upon rhetoric rather than upon reason--which is precisely his own charge against the would-be reformers of the Anglican Church.

Both Munz and Kearney maintain that Hooker's position, as a proponent of natural law and as a defender of the established Elizabethan secular and religious authority, is basically untenable. Clearly, then, the objections of both Kearney and Munz amount to issues of compatibility; each of them maintains that Hooker's conclusions in his later books cannot coexist with the foundations laid in his earlier books. What both Kearney and Munz gloss over is whether or not the very methodology employed by Hooker is itself an aspect of his defense, and whether that methodology can be questioned. To

consider these issues, it is absolutely necessary to determine the first principles of knowledge with which Hooker himself reasons; we must know how he defines and judges truth in order to sound his epistemological base. That, hopefully, is what I have done.

Cargill Thompson proceeds to answer both Kearney and Munz in a lengthy article, which serves also as an introduction to many of the key points in Hooker's thought. Among the ideas Cargill Thompson considers (many of which I have addressed as well) is Hooker's fundamental belief that in a Christian commonwealth, such as England, church and state are simply different aspects of a single entity, the community of Christian citizens: the state attends to the secular well-being of the people, the Church attends to their spiritual guidance and salvation. Hooker's entire defense of Royal Supremacy hinges on this principle, which itself rests upon the distinction between the "visible church," those who profess themselves Christians, and the "invisible church," those who are going to be saved: the invisible church is known only to God, but the visible church is apparent to everyone, for it includes not only good Christians but even heretics and notorious sinners--as long as they profess their belief in Christ. Since England exists as a Christian nation, the

monarch must therefore be responsible for the overall welfare of the visible church--which means his authority extends naturally into the polity of the Church of England. But it is critical here to recall that "polity" for Hooker is comprised of "things indifferent," or those matters of custom and form upon which the salvation of the individual soul is not contingent. Matters of faith are not subject to ecclesiastical polity, nor are they subject to the expediencies of a Christian ruler or even the consent of the governed people. According to Hooker, it is this distinction between matters of polity and matters of faith, of "things indifferent" and things prescribed, that the puritans have consistently failed to recognize.

The primary purpose of Hooker's argument was to show that the Puritans were in error in holding "that Scripture is the only rule to frame all our actions by" (pref.8.4) and that in consequence the principal reason that they put forward for opposing the existing laws and ceremonies of the Church of England--the fact that they were not in accordance with what was laid down in Scripture--was entirely without foundation. (Cargill Thompson 23-24)

While Cargill Thompson cites Hooker's epistemological disclaimer, "In every kind of knowledge some such grounds there are, as that being proposed the mind doth presently

embrace them as free from all possibilities of error, clear and manifest without proof" (1.8.5), he never enunciates exactly what these "grounds" are. Cargill Thompson mentions that "the precepts of natural law comprise a series of self-evident propositions which man himself is capable of discovering through the light of reason" (28), but he does not address the historical fact that self-evidentiality is rather an elusive quality. Hume, for example, more than a century and a half after Hooker, came to doubt the principle of causality; he insisted, curiously enough, that he could conceive any number of real effects without any kind of cause whatsoever. What I hope to have provided is a detailed examination of so-called axiomatic truths, implicit and explicit in Hooker, to which his puritan opponents would be likely to object.

For it is precisely his axiomatically broad reliance upon human reason which often alienated Hooker from the puritans of his time. According to Paul Avis, in his essay "Richard Hooker And John Calvin," the reformers' admiration for Calvin transcended rational argument, whereas

Hooker discussed the Genevan system purely on its merits and not with the reverence due to a divinely-revealed scheme. To speak of Calvin acting wisely or correctly in the circumstances was, as far as they were concerned, to damn with faint praise! (Avis 26)

The focus of Avis's brief article is Hooker's critique of the basis of Calvin's authority, and the subsequent Calvinist-oriented attack upon Hooker in A Christian Letter, and Avis elicits a response from Richard Baukham that touches on several key epistemological points. Baukham comments that Hooker's

whole approach in the polity--that of laying a broad theological and philosophical basis on which to rest his defence of English Church polity--was a relatively new tactic which shifted the debate away from the usual Protestant discussion of scriptural principles. (Baukham 30)

The arena in which Hooker purports to conduct his debate is natural reason, not rhetoric. Yet at a number of critical junctures in the Laws, the distinction between reason and rhetoric becomes blurred. That is where Hooker's circularity, I think, becomes evident. This process involves stripping what is being said to its bare syllogistic framework in order to judge not only the logical movement, but the underlying premises as well. Baukham adds that Hooker "simply regards Calvin's scheme as produced without reference to scripture and then subsequently justified by exegesis" (32). In essence, what I have done here is to turn Hooker's own criteria back

upon the polemic of the Laves--to determine to what extent, if any, his desired conclusions colored the processes of his thought.

In his essay, "Answering 'the Known Men': Bishop Reginald Pecock and Mr. Richard Hooker," Charles Brockwell abstracts from Hooker what amounts to a ladder of knowledge: "God has given us sense, reason which goes beyond sense and prophetic revelation which goes beyond reason" (Brockwell 142). He continues:

For Hooker, the "principal intent" of scripture was "to deliver the laws and duties supernatural." Scripture teaches those truths which natural discourse either could not discover or would have difficulty in discovering. Reason cannot teach men how to glorify God as Savior. For that we must have divine law which both corroborates and supplements the law of reason. Thus in moral actions divine law helps the law of reason; for supernatural truth the divine law is the only guide. (ibid.)

Brockwell's analysis, although it illuminates many of the nuances of Hooker's system, is a bit fuzzy in terms of specific guidelines. For instance, in the passage cited above, how exactly is reason supposed to judge itself? If indeed divine revelation brings to light "those truths which natural discourse either could not discover or would have difficulty discovering," the assumption is that the mind would at a

certain point perceive a kind of intellectual stop-sign; but if such signs exist, they are at best clouded by an inherent rational bias, and to presume that kind of clear-cut intellectual surrender seems to me an oversimplification.

Brockwell's remarks on the role of reason in justifying scripture, on the other hand, seem to me more lucid. He argues that Hooker saw one of the functions of reason as providing "the arguments which could establish the sacred authority of scripture" (143). This actualizing role of the intellect I have addressed at considerable length, for the interactions of reason and faith are intimate and complex--and in the case of Hooker necessarily circular. It is not, I believe, a case of clearly segregated domains. Faith suffuses reason and vice-versa at the most basic levels of Hooker's thought, from his initial preference for Thomas over Augustine to his hermeneutical decision that scripture cannot be read literally where it contradicts rational knowledge. Brockwell himself touches upon this idea, noting that the puritan polemicists "employed reason to disparage reason, just as they cited learned men who shared their disapprobation of the authority of men" (144). This is clearly a case of rational selectivity, the use of rational method only insofar as it suits one's purposes. Such (literally) willful manipulation fails to meet

the rational criteria for self-conscious argumentation--but in the case of the puritans, the appeal to logical coherence in spiritual matters was secondary to the divine illumination of grace.

Paul Surlis, in his essay "Natural Law In Richard Hooker," delves a bit deeper into Hooker's conception of the interactions of the intellect and the will in man. According to Surlis, Hooker believes that it is the will which inclines human beings towards divinity: "The point Hooker is at pains to establish is that in man this is a voluntary (as distinct from a natural) inclination. At the center of the human will's volitions is the desire for goodness which draws the will, but before it can be desired the good must be known" (Surlis 180). Thus the intellect must first apprehend a particular good before the will is drawn, inexorably, towards it. The process of intellectual apprehension is hence crucial in an understanding of Hooker's notion of volition--and volition, of course, stands at the center of his delineation of both natural law and ecclesiastical polity. Surlis adds that Hooker

keeps steadily before his reader the fundamental object of his quest . . . what is the "natural way whereby rules have been found out concerning that goodness wherewith the will of man ought to be moved in human actions". (182)

As for the task discerning goodness, Surlis finds two possible ways: either to recognize goodness "in its causes" or to follow the established historical patterns of men. Of these two ways, the first is the surer; unfortunately, it is also the more difficult, and not every man has the intellectual wherewithal to do it. So for most men, the safest course of actions is to adhere to the norm, to go with what the tradition is, confident in the belief that the tradition did not emerge ex nihilo but was itself wrought in the past by wise men upon the dictates of Nature (ibid.). This reverence for tradition is, as we have seen, omnipresent in Hooker's Laws. Without it, he cannot hope to defeat the Puritan position. For the idea that tradition is grounded in natural reason bolsters his defense of the status quo against the charge of dogmatism--it is not dogmatic to want to preserve a rationally sound institution.

In his essay, "The Hermeneutical Problem in Richard Hooker," Egil Grislis begins with a useful summary of critical approaches to Hooker's work through the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries (160-66), concluding

that the interpretation of Hooker's thought is in its beginning stages, that the basic problems have, if not been solved, at least been defined,

and that something like an agenda for further study is before us. (167)

Grislis then focuses upon the problem of subjectivity, which is to say "Hooker's own inquiry as to how one may write with a maximum of objectivity" (ibid.). Here Grislis has touched upon one of the dominant themes in Hooker's thought, for the quest for objectivity is central not only to Hooker's system but to his rhetorical pleas as well. In the very opening of the Laves, he acknowledges that as a defender of the established order he is liable to charges that he "seeke[s] preferment" (1.1.1). So he pleads for objectivity, "So that if the judgements of men doe but holde themselves in suspence as touching these first more generall meditations, till in order they have perused the rest that ensue: what may seeme darke at the first will afterwarde be founde more plaine . . ."

(1.1.2). Hooker fears that he may simply be dismissed, as defenders of authority often are. And by means of subtle rhetorical devices throughout his treatise he tugs at the reader, praying him only to retain an open mind towards his arguments.

By contrast, Hooker seeks to highlight the fundamental subjectivity of the puritan position--especially with regards to what they consider their own spiritually-enlightened

interpretations of scripture. The idiosyncracies of puritan exegesis are attributed (by the puritans, themselves) to the influence of the Holy Ghost, preserving them from the critique of natural reason. For Hooker, this argument runs counter to the entire principle of objectivity--and we must recall that objectivity is in essence a rational function: "It is not therefore the fervent earnestnes of their perswasion, but the soundnes of those reasons whereupon the same is built, which must declare their opinions in these things to have bene wrought by the holie Ghost" (pref.3.10). As Grislis points out, "while Hooker certainly does not exclude the assistance of the Holy Spirit, he refuses to regard the work of the Holy Spirit as an irrational miracle that must bypass every use of reason" (Grislis 195).

For Hooker, the proper use of reason is itself an aspect of grace and as such involved in the activities of the Holy Spirit. Reason is indeed a gift from God, given to all human beings, and it is not to be gratuitously renounced. Whenever Hooker appeals to what is "self-evident," he invokes the universality of the gift of reason. Although reason does not manifest itself perfectly in men, and is sometimes deceived, at its core it is incontestable. Even those who would deny the self-evidence of the first principles of reason cannot do so

except by invoking them. Yet it is not the coherence of logic as a system but the applicability to spiritual matters that is in question between the puritans and the conformist.

The function of reason, for Hooker, is to find out truth. If men are to have access to the great truth of salvation through the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice, it is necessary that reason lead them to it. For Hooker, "truth is not a human invention, unique and unrepeatable; it is a subjectively gained insight that has an objective foundation in reality itself" (Grislis 177). This subjectivity is an unfortunate by-product of the imperfect state of reason in fallen mankind--a notion with which any puritan would be comfortable. But it is Hooker's stance that individual subjectivity can be overcome by a diligent regard for tradition, which itself represents the historical consensus of wise men, and is rooted ultimately in the will of God. The subjective scriptural interpretations of the puritans, therefore, unless they can be demonstrated through reason as superior to those of the established church, must subordinate themselves to the acquired wisdom as represented by tradition. As Grilis remarks, "right reason is not viewed as a mere abstraction but will have been embodied in the judicious thinkers of the church" (181).

The closest to a strictly epistemological study of Hooker's thought is W. Speed Hill's article "Doctrine and Polity in Hooker's Laws." The intricacies of the relationship between grace and reason are investigated in some detail here, and grace emerges as an agent of intellectual actualization:

. . . once grace had restored man's freedom to choose, man's reason could reassume its primal efficacy as an instrument of moral choice. For unless man could discriminate between good and evil, unless he was aware himself which of his own desires were constructive and which self-defeating, he would never be able to choose rightly, and his freedom to choose would become meaningless. (179-180)

The reason this restoration of man's freedom to choose is even necessary is man's first disobedience: "the consequence of original sin was paralysis of the will, not perversion of it. Evil was never chosen by Adam's descendents as such, but only because it seemed to them to be a good" (179). This is a crucial issue, for grace then permits us to utilize our natural reason for the purpose of leading a moral and just life. The line has thus been drawn between the will of God, as manifest in the divine gift of grace, and the human faculties of apprehension and judgement, through which we arrive at our own moral choices.

Thus, in the Laws, when Hooker came to defend the English Church as established, he was first obliged to rehabilitate man's free will from the debilitating effects of original sin if he was to argue convincingly that men could and had freely and responsibly followed the laws of nature in foundation of its polity. He had to limit the disenfranchisement of man's reason by his adamic disobedience if its determinations were to be accepted as authoritative and its laws obeyed. And he had to do all this without laying himself open to the charge of "popery and pelagianism." Thus his advocacy of reason and natural law as somehow to be erected upon a theology of grace; his assertion of man's free will had to rest upon the distinction between the universality of grace and the particularity of election. God assisting, man was able to make valid choices in the things that concerned his life on earth. God's will was, in this sphere, subject to analysis and comprehension. Grace had renovated man's reason as a faculty of moral choice, and God's will was that man exercise that faculty, to their eternal felicity no less than their temporal well-being. (181)

This is the crux of the epistemological challenge in Hooker's Laws, for if human reason has been rendered spiritually impotent as a consequence of original sin, as the puritans followed Calvin and Luther in insisting, then natural law--upon which rests the entirety of Hooker's defense of both secular and ecclesiastical tradition--disintegrates. For natural law functions within the context of a continuum between an essentially knowable world and a divine lex aeterna which represents God's will. We must be able through our

knowledge of the mechanisms of this world to ascertain God's intentions for us. Natural law is the codification of human behavior in accordance with what we perceive as divine principles of operation. Darken our perceptions, and what we are left with is the scriptures as the sole source of the will of God. That, indeed, is the Puritan position. And it is this position that Hooker encounters in his treatise.

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