

The Folger Library Edition of
The Works of Richard Hooker



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The Folger Library Edition
of
The Works of Richard Hooker

W. Speed Hill
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Volume One

Richard Hooker
Of the Laws of
Ecclesiastical Polity

Preface
Books I to IV

Georges Edelen
Editor

The Belknap Press of
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Cambridge, Massachusetts
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1977

Preface to the Edition

The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker is a critical, old-spelling edition of all the extant writings of one of the most important authors of the English Renaissance. Its texts are based on fresh transcriptions of the earliest and most authoritative documents, in many instances manuscripts written or corrected by Hooker himself or contemporary transcripts of these. The critical apparatus of each text records all substantive variants among the authoritative documents, whether adopted into the text or not, as well as all departures in accidentals from the copy text not covered by the conventions of transcription (silent alterations), which are detailed by each editor for his own texts. The aim of the apparatus is to enable the interested reader to reconstruct in all pertinent textual detail the underlying text and to verify for himself its authority. No attempt has been made to provide, either in the text or its associated apparatus, the bibliographic or paleographic detail that only the original, or a photographic facsimile of it, can supply.

The unusual authority of our copy texts has permitted a conservative treatment in both accidentals and substantives, and the need to emend has been infrequent. Errors in the text that we were confident did not reflect Hooker's intentions, as well as those clearly attributable to the process of transmission itself, have been corrected, but we have not imposed a uniformity of accidental texture on texts whose forms may derive from manuscripts dating as early as the 1580s (in the case of Walter Travers' *Supplication* and Hooker's *Answer* to it) or from a book printed as late as 1662 (Bishop Gauden's text of Book VII of the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*), and we have accepted as inevitable a certain variation in accidentals in old-spelling texts as widely variant in provenance as ours. Indeed, there will be variation within a narrower range in any given text, since no author, scribe, or compositor of the period was himself wholly consistent in these matters. Anomalies

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PREFACE TO THE EDITION

been published had not enlightened patrons come forward with support. The Press of Case Western Reserve University presided over the project's inception and early organization. The Folger Shakespeare Library gave formal sponsorship at a critical moment in its early existence, and that Library's staff, and especially its Director, O. B. Hardison, Jr., have been unfailingly generous in offering to us the use of its superb collections and facilities. The Harvard University Press agreed to publish the edition when the Press of Case Western Reserve University was closed down by that University's officials under the economic pressures of the early 1970s. An award from Herbert H. Lehman College, through the Faculty Research Award Program of The City University of New York, helped to defray editorial costs for the period 1973-74. The National Endowment for the Humanities, through its program for support of editions in the humanities, has since subvented the editorial costs of the edition, enabling its widely dispersed editors to gather twice yearly at the Folger Library to confer with one another in what has been from the beginning and by design a collaborative enterprise. It is heartening to us—and may give hope to others as well—that in a time of relentless cultural instability such support should have been offered for an edition of the writings of a man who, in a comparable age, sought to preserve the stability of a society through a greater understanding of the authority of its constituent laws. It has been our aim to produce texts and a commentary worthy of the confidence these sponsors, patrons, and publishers have placed in us and in our author.

W. Speed Hill
General Editor

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Georges Edelen
Bloomington, Indiana
1 April 1976