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Annual  
Report  
1977

Honorable Mention for the annual George Freedley Memorial Award of the Theatre Library Association. Cited as one of the two best books on theatre history published in 1976, Shakespeare on the American Stage was honored at a special awards ceremony May 9 atop One Times Square in New York City. The ceremony was aired live over New York radio station WNYC, with Broadway Producer Morton Gottlieb presiding, and Executive Editor John Andrews was on hand to accept the award on behalf of Charles Shattuck, who was unable to attend.

The George Freedley Memorial Award ceremony in May was not the only auspicious note for the Folger publication program. An equally significant event occurred on Friday, March 4, when the Folger joined with Harvard University Press to celebrate the publication of the first two volumes of The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker. Conceived nearly a decade ago, the Hooker edition was preceded in 1972 by a collection of critical and interpretive essays, Studies in Richard Hooker (edited by W. Speed Hill and published by the Case Western Reserve Press), and will eventually consist of eight volumes of text and commentary. The two volumes published in March provide texts of the Preface and Books I-V of Hooker's Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, with Volume I (containing the Preface and Books I-IV) edited by Georges Edelen of Indiana University and Volume II (containing the massive Book V) edited by the General Editor, W. Speed Hill of Herbert H. Lehman College, City University of New York. Both volumes are meticulously prepared, beautifully printed, and handsomely bound, and Harvard is offering them for what these days is a relatively modest price for scholarly editions: \$30.00 a volume.

To mark the occasion, the Press and the Library sponsored a full day of events, beginning with a press conference at 11:00 a.m. and concluding with a reception at 9:30 p.m. Dozens of distinguished guests were on hand for the celebration, including Harvard English Professor Herschel Baker, to whom the edition is dedicated, and Harvard University Press Director Arthur M. Rosenthal. The formal program began with a two-hour symposium on Richard Hooker in the Folger Theatre (from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.). Following welcoming remarks by Folger Director O. B. Hardison, Jr., and General Editor W. Speed Hill, an audience of more than 100 heard a fine lecture on "Thomas

More and Richard Hooker" by Richard S. Sylvester (Executive Editor of The Yale Edition of the Works of St. Thomas More) and provocative comments about the current state of Hooker scholarship by three members of the Editorial Committee. John E. Booty (Professor of Church History, Episcopal Divinity School) answered the question "Who Wrote A Christian Letter?"; Paul G. Stanwood (Professor of English, University of British Columbia) spoke on "'True Sons of His Right Hand': Recovering the Three Last Books of Hooker's Polity"; and A. S. McGrade (Professor of Philosophy, University of Connecticut) discussed "The Laws Behind the Laws." The symposium was followed by a reception in the Folger Exhibition Gallery (from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.). At 8:00 p.m. participants reconvened in the nave of the Washington Cathedral for the lecture that highlighted the day: an address on "Richard Hooker and the Church of England" by Hugh R. Trevor-Roper (Regius Professor of Modern History, University of Oxford). Professor Trevor-Roper was introduced by His Excellency the British Ambassador, Sir Peter Ramsbotham, to whom General Editor W. Speed Hill presented a set of Hooker volumes as a gift to Her Royal Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Following Professor Trevor-Roper's lecture in the Cathedral, members of the audience attended a reception at the British Embassy. There additional copies of the edition were presented to Professor Trevor-Roper, to Lady Ramsbotham, and to Robert Kingston, Deputy Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities (the NEH having provided financial support for the editorial and administrative costs associated with the edition). Professor Trevor-Roper's lecture, which among other things was a gracious review of the Hooker edition, appeared in the November 24, 1977 issue of The New York Review of Books.

In some ways the most dramatic occurrence of 1976/77 was the quietest. At the end of June 1977, the Library decided to exercise the termination clause in the Folger's contract with the University Press of Virginia. As of October 1, therefore, the Folger's ten-year co-publishing relationship with Virginia will come to an end. It is a relationship that has always been amicable and valuable, and the Folger is grateful to the entire staff of the Press for a decade of beneficial cooperation and growth.



Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador  
and Lady Ramsbotham  
and the Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library  
and Mrs. O. B. Hardison, Jr.  
and the Director of the Harvard University Press  
and Mrs. Arthur J. Rosenthal  
request the pleasure of your company  
at a reception  
to mark the publication  
of the Folger Library Edition  
of the Works of Richard Hooker  
at the British Embassy Residence  
at 9:30 p.m.  
Friday, March 4, 1977

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R. M. Adams: Why Tolkien?

Volume XXIV, Number 19

November 24, 1977 85¢

# The New York Review

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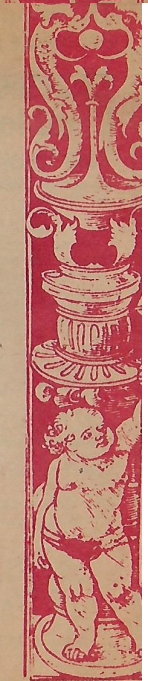
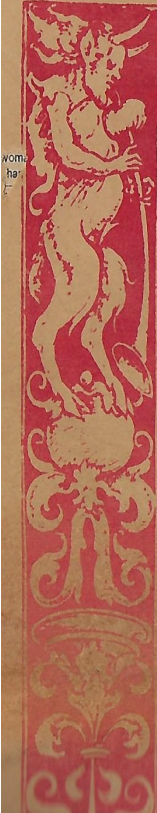
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# The Good & Great Works of Richard Hooker

H. R. Trevor-Roper

## Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity

Preface and Books I-V

by Richard Hooker.

The Folger Library Edition of the

Works of Richard Hooker,

edited by W. Speed Hill.

Belknap Press of Harvard University

Press, Vol. I, 416 pp.; Vol. II, 624 pp.,

\$60.00 the set\*

## I

At first sight, it seems odd that Richard Hooker should be celebrated, and his works published, in America. Hooker is a very English figure, the Doctor Angelicus of the Church of England—that established Church which, from the first publication, in 1593, of his great work, *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, turned back the tide of Puritanism and sent its irreducible opponents to find a refuge,

*safe from the storm's and prelate's  
rage,*

in this more hospitable land. Why then should it be in this continent, which has rejected all established churches, that his works are now being republished, more splendidly and more accurately than ever, thanks to the generosity of American scholars? On the face of it, it is a paradox.

It is not the only paradox. Hooker's work itself presents us with paradoxes. There is the paradox of his reputation. His great work was born of controversy. It was designed to secure the victory of a party in the bitter struggles of the Elizabethan Church. But in spite of this, he himself has always, in some mysterious way, remained an Olympian figure, standing benignly above the battle in which, historically, he had been so deeply engaged. In his lifetime, the praises of this Protestant, Anglican writer were sung, we are told, by Pope and Cardinals. After his death, King James I, arriving from Scotland to claim his new kingdom, was disappointed to find that he was too late to meet "that man from whose books I have received such satisfaction." A generation later, King Charles I and Archbishop Laud took up the refrain. But when the Puritans have rebelled against both King and Archbishop, Hooker, we find, does not sink with them: he rises effortlessly on the new stream. The magniloquent tirades of Milton spare the name of this more sedate, more philosophical prosaist; the radical pamphleteers of the Civil War explicitly exempt from condemnation "the sweet and noble Hooker," and the Puritan Baxter claims him as an ally.

When Church and King are restored, the Puritans sink again out of sight. But not Hooker. Now he enjoys his apotheosis as the patron saint of the narrow, high-flying, high-Tory Church of the Restoration; and there he stays—until the Glorious Revolution of 1688 when behold! while dynasty and high-Tory Anglicanism go down, he surfaces again as the avowed oracle of John Locke and

\*Three more volumes in this edition—the balance of the laws, a volume of sermons and tractates, and a volume of contemporary commentary on the laws—will be published in 1978.

the Whig party. And so it goes on. In the 1830s the last complete edition of Hooker's writings before this great American project filled six years of the life of John Keble, the founder of that Oxford movement which in some ways was the reversal of Hooker's work: for it ended by disowning the royal supremacy, which Hooker had so uncompromisingly defended, and by sending many of its intellectual leaders back from Canterbury to Rome. No wonder he has

turbulent beginnings and seem, in retrospect, to rise out of untroubled thought. Nevertheless, to understand them we need to know their origins as well as their originality. Therefore let us look, first, at the religious controversies of Elizabethan England, out of which *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* was born.

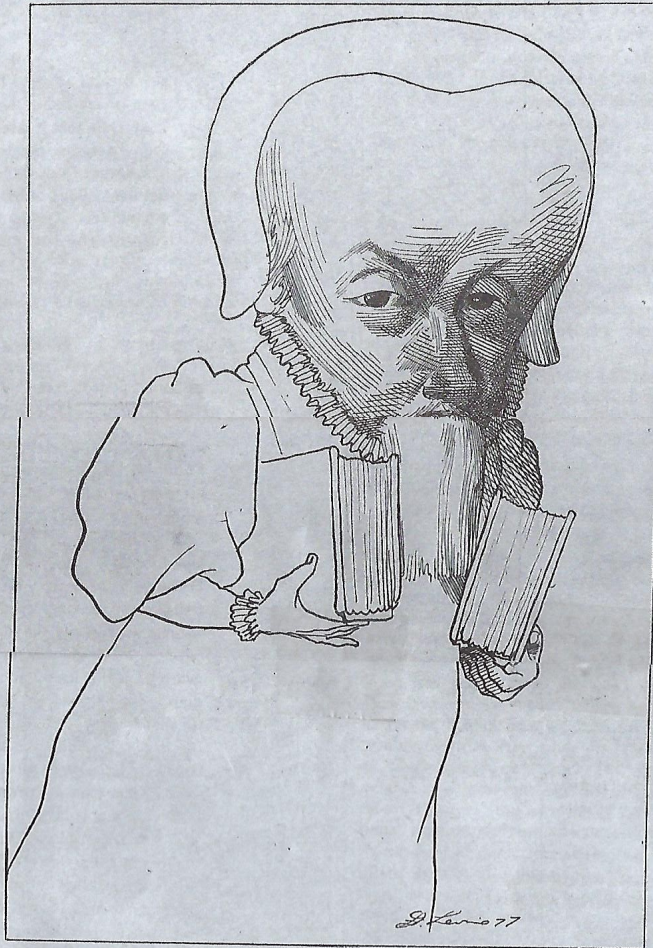
Richard Hooker was born early in 1554, a few months after the death of Edward VI and the accession of his

was quite different. What they discovered was Calvin's model: a church reconstituted on a new base, sanctified not by the gradual test of time but by the immediate authority of Scripture and the supposed practice of the apostles. This new model was fundamentally incompatible with the Erasmian model of the English reformers. That had been historical, evolutionary, continuous. This was unhistorical, anti-historical, fundamentalist. That had been adapted to the social forms of a modern monarchy. This implied another form of society: oligarchical, radical, perhaps revolutionary. That had been comprehensive, the church of the whole Christian people. This was exclusive, the Church of a party, the Elect.

In early days, in the days of the common struggle against Rome, these differences might be obscured. Against the common danger, both parties found it best to stand together, postponing implicit differences. When the Marian exiles returned to Elizabethan England, they were ready, at first, to work within the existing structure; for they were weak and the Queen's government was indispensable. On her side the Queen, though determined to tolerate no "innovation," no "new-fangledness," was ready to use their services, for she was weak too, and needed them. So the parties settled down to an uneasy co-existence made possible by two things: first, by a large middle party of miscellaneous non-Calvinist lay Puritans who had no desire for revolution; secondly, by the legal supremacy of an indispensable Queen. So long as Elizabeth lived, the *Via Media*, it seemed, could live too: or at least its implicit tensions could be contained.

So long as she lived... But how long would she live? That was the great question. If she should die, who could deny the right of Mary Stuart, Mary Queen of Scots, to succeed her? Mary Stuart was a Roman Catholic. As such, Parliament might debar her; but Parliament had debarred Mary Tudor, and with what result? She had come in, and all these fragile paper barriers had dissolved before her. If Mary Stuart, like Mary Tudor, were to come in as rightful queen, how could either the unorganized forces of lay Puritanism or the fragile opportunism of a Laodicean Church resist the full force of legitimate, acknowledged, established power?

Effective resistance requires organization, discipline, political will. It also requires firm doctrine, an ideology, a myth. If we ask who, in the 1570s, had that discipline, that myth, there is only one answer. It was international Calvinism: that international Calvinism which was able to defy Church and legitimate Crown in France; which had overthrown Church and legitimate Queen in Scotland; and which would soon overthrow Church and legitimate Crown in the Netherlands. Against the possible accession of the deposed Queen of Scots in England, the Calvinists were preparing an organization which could survive even a new Counter-Reformation. Such an organization must repudiate the royal supremacy, episcopacy, historic continuity. By its very nature it must necessarily undermine and destroy the



been immortalized under the misleading title of "the judicious Hooker"!

How is it that Hooker, whose writings were hammered out in the internal party warfare of sixteenth-century religion, has so effortlessly transcended those battles? Why does his work alone survive the silent carnage of time? Who now—except the editors and commentators of Hooker—reads the controversial works of Cartwright and Travers, Whitgift and Bancroft, Stapleton and Persons? They have disappeared, and we see them only in fragmentary form: gobbets and slivers pickled in the footnotes to Hooker.

This, of course, is not unnatural. Many great works have been born in controversy, designed to serve short-term partisan ends. St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Descartes, Locke, Marx, all built up their systems against now forgotten adversaries. Vulgar disputants die with the disputes which have nourished them. Great works shed their

Roman Catholic sister Mary Tudor. By that change of sovereign, the English Reformation, it seemed, had been fatally arrested. Some might say that the English Reformation had already outrun its original design; but we need not debate that point. The essential fact is that in the next five years numbers of English Protestants, seeing their Reformation halted, and its professors burned, fled abroad, and there, in Geneva, discovered a new model of the reformed Church very different from anything previously envisaged in England. For the concept of the Church which they had inherited was, in essentials, an Erasmian concept: they imagined a Church in which the traditional structure was purified of its abuses, and infused with a new spirit, under the protection—since the old spiritual head had been irremediably corrupted—of the lay ruler, the national Prince.

But the concept of the Church which these exiles now discovered in Geneva

precarioously established Elizabethan Church.

In those years of incubation Richard Hooker was at Oxford, first, a student, then a fellow of Corpus Christi college, the college of Erasmus. At first he had been seduced by the appeal of Calvinism, with its high claims of doctrinal and structural purity; indeed, he had been suspended from his fellowship, perhaps on that account. But he had survived both that enthusiasm and that suspension; and having survived, he had found a new purpose in his own life. He would deprive the Puritans of their monopoly and create a myth, a permanent intellectual and historical justification, for the still fragile and precarious Eramasian Anglican Church.

For we are now in the 1580s, that terrible decade, when England was beleaguered by the forces of the Counter-Reformation, when plot after plot was being mounted to destroy Queen Elizabeth for the benefit of Mary Stuart, when Alexander Farnese was reconquering the Netherlands for Spain, and invincible armadas were being built for the conquest of England. At any moment now Queen Elizabeth might be struck down, as William of Orange and Henri III of France were struck down; and then the great crisis would have come: a crisis for which revolutionary Calvinism had prepared itself but Anglicanism, as yet, had not.

In the 1580s, the Calvinists were indeed ready. Themselves a small minority, they were nevertheless highly organized, well disciplined, confident. Sure of it, they were nevertheless nigny organized, well disciplined, confident. Sure of themselves, sure of their ideology and their foreign support, they claimed the leadership of the uncertain English Protestants and sought to build up, behind the temporary façade of the episcopal Church, an unbreakable organization which would deal with Mary Stuart in England as their brethren of Scotland had already dealt with her there. It was then that Thomas Cartwright and Walter Travers—the head and the neck of English Calvinism, as they would be called—set out resolutely to capture the still indeterminate Church of England from within, and it was then that the Calvinist agitator John Field—“that Field which the Lord hath blessed,” as the faithful called him—set in motion a plan to capture Parliament too. Had they succeeded, they would have destroyed one Church and created another. Their plan, Sir John Neale has written, was “*tabula rasa*, stark revolution.”

These were the circumstances in which Richard Hooker sat down to write *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. As Master of the Temple, he met Calvinism at close quarters, for Walter Travers was his colleague, in the Temple itself, preaching and writing against him. How tense the atmosphere must have been in the Temple in those days, among those disputatious Elizabethan lawyers. Every Sunday morning they heard the Master preach the doctrines of pure Canterbury. Every afternoon they heard him corrected by his more famous lecturer, preaching pure Geneva. For Travers was a man of note, of influence, patronized by the great Lord Burghley. Fortunately, Hooker had a patron too. This was Archbishop Whitgift, an authoritarian churchman who, though himself half-Calvinist in theology, had already struck many a blow, both controversial and disciplinary, against the leaders of that party. Hooker could safely leave the political battle to his patron. His own task was purely intellectual. He wished

to discredit the ideology of the Calvinists and replace it by an Anglican ideology strong enough to capture the intellectual leadership of the Church.

This was no parochial aim. Hooker did not intend merely to outbid the English Puritans in English Church politics or in theological controversy. His aims were far higher than that. They were general, indeed universal. He aimed to fix the Church of England not merely on a coherent doctrinal but on an indisputable philosophical base. Nor was it for England only. For although he insisted that Church and Commonwealth were coterminous in jurisdiction, he did not accept that the Church of Christ had national or geographical limits. The Church of England was to him what the Church of Geneva was to Calvin: the model for all Christendom.

This may not be obvious to us. We look back on history and know the answers. We see that, in the end, the

English Church, like other Churches, became a national Church. But in the sixteenth century, who was to foresee that? The medieval Church had been international, the Church of Christendom. The great reformers, in seeking to repair it, had no idea of breaking it up: they wished not to separate from it but to renew it and to renew it whole. Luther did not mean to found a mere Germanic church, nor Calvin to end merely as the high-priest of Geneva, Holland, Scotland. Similarly, if Anglicanism were to enter the fray, it too must make universal claims. It was only after a century of deadlock between rival claims to universality that Europe reconciled itself to distinct national churches.

Such claims required much more than mere controversial victory. The air of Elizabethan England was already full of controversy: disconnected and discordant cries, which swelled in volume in the 1580s, about sacraments and miracles,

surplices and sabbath-days, episcopacy, liturgy, images, ceremonies, patronage, preaching, “prophesying,” the Apocalypse. Hooker resolved to go behind these slogans and symptoms and build up, not from Scriptural texts but from first principles, a coherent general system in which these particular controversies would either be resolved or wither away. He would not engage the adversary frontally in marginal disputes—those “public disputations” to which the Puritans were such “earnest challengers”; or at least he would only handle such disputes in their proper place, once the general issues had been set out; and those general issues would be determined by the only final arbiter which all men must recognize: that is, by reason, “true, sound, divine reason” which was necessary to the interpretation of doctrine and discipline, even of Scripture itself. By placing the Elizabethan Church on a base not merely of



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tradition or prophecy or national law but universal reason, Hooker set out to be the complete rational philosopher, the Aquinas of Anglicanism.

Such was the political origin of Hooker's eight books of *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, of which the first four books were published in 1593. Though written in installments, the work was conceived, from the beginning, as an orderly and consistent whole. The fifth book, longer than the first four put together, appeared in 1597. The last three books, having disappeared from view at Hooker's death in 1600, would emerge, fifty and sixty years later, trailing clouds of controversy as they came: controversy almost as great as that from which they had been born.

In this necessarily brief and summary account I have made some bold, perhaps some rash statements. Almost any statement about Hooker is rash today, when the foundations of scholarship about him have been, for a whole generation, shaken. Therefore let me hastily qualify some of my remarks. First, I must not suggest that Hooker was an isolated genius who singlehandedly established the philosophical base of Anglicanism. Such isolated genius, in my opinion, does not exist. It is the competition of peers which pushes genius to express itself—and then to eclipse its rivals so that it alone is remembered. Hooker could not have written without the work of other men—especially that of his two chief patrons and predecessors, Jewel and Whitgift. But as he eclipsed them in depth and range and expression, we remember him, not them. Secondly, let

me amplify a little the statement that Hooker advanced for Anglicanism universal claims: that he saw the Church of England as an ecumenical Church. For this, I am sure, may be contested.

In some ways Hooker can certainly be presented as the advocate of a national rather than an international Church. Did he not allow that all forms of government are equally legitimate? Did

an obscure parochial language unknown in Europe? To all these questions we must surely answer, yes. However, if we detach Hooker's concept of church and society from the controversy which engendered it, we may see it in a different light.

To Hooker, as to Jewel and Parker and all Anglican apologists, the Church of England was historically continuous



he not argue that the Church, though it was vindicated by its essential truth, was itself, in organization, "a politic society," subject to the general laws of political and historical variation, and therefore, by a necessary consequence, plural? Did he not justify the right of the Church of England to go its own way? And did he not write in English,

from earliest times. Unlike the Puritans, who were essentially unhistorical, he recognized the legitimacy of historical change. Secular society, he believed, changes its form, while retaining a lasting obligation to the original terms of its existence, and the Church, being a politic society too, has the same legitimate variety, and the same ultimate

obligation. This variety, he believed, was applicable to both doctrine and discipline. There were of course fundamentals both of doctrine and of polity, but there were also, in both, *adiaphora*, "things indifferent." There were many differences between Canterbury and Rome which need not, in themselves, lead to rupture; although modern Rome had deviated fatally from the true course, nevertheless the Catholic Church remained "a part of the house of God and a limb of the visible Church of Christ." Good Puritans goggled at such statements; nor perhaps were they entirely pleased with their corollary, that the differences between Canterbury and Geneva, being merely historical, the effect of local circumstances, were equally harmless. To the Calvinists—though not always to Calvin himself—the Genevan model was of absolute validity. Hooker was a relativist. His relativism extended even to episcopacy. Episcopacy, he believed, was of apostolic institution and consecrated by use; but it was not positively enjoined by the Law of God. Therefore, in certain circumstances, it might be rejected, as it had been in Geneva. The corollary was that, even in England, it was not an essential of faith. Therein lay a time bomb for the next century.

However, in all this Hooker is not arguing for distinct national Churches as opposed to a universal Church. Nobody, I believe, argued thus in his time. His argument is that of Erasmus: a more constructive, less skeptical Erasmus. To him the organization of the universal Church is, and always has been, compatible with local variations, and neither the essential unity of the Church, nor the essential identity of its doctrine, need be broken over matters



which are in themselves indifferent. It was to preserve the unity of the Church against schism that Erasmus had insisted on the indifference of "external religion," and it was because the Roman Church had converted such *adiaphora* into articles of faith that he accused it (as Hooker accused the Calvinists) of causing schism. In his relativism, therefore, Hooker is not advocating separate national churches, but rather a historically justified pluralism within a universal Church. Moreover he clearly believed that the Anglican Church was the best model for other national churches within the Christian world.

This was shown, in due course, by his two most personal disciples, George Cranmer and Edwin Sandys. Cranmer was the great-nephew of Archbishop Cranmer, Sandys the son of Hooker's former patron Archbishop Sandys. Both had been pupils of Hooker at Corpus Christi college. They had helped him when he was writing his great work, and had criticized his drafts, sharpening them up at times and pointing them more particularly at the immediate enemy, that is, at the English Puritans. Sandys also personally underwrote the cost of publishing the first four books. Immediately after those four books had been given to the printer, Cranmer and Sandys set off together on a prolonged tour of Western Europe. Their principal purpose, as Sandys wrote, was to view the state of religion "in these Western parts of the world, their divided factions and professions, their differences in matters of faith, and their exercises of religion in government ecclesiastical and in life and conversation..." and, finally, to discover whether there were any "possibilities and good means of uniting at least the several branches of the reformed professions, if unity universal be more to be desired than hoped in the present differences."

His chief words, having helped their master to produce his great work, and

given it topicality in the context of the English controversies then raging, Sandys and Cranmer went abroad to explore the possibility of using it as a model for Christian reunion. They spent several years in travel, Cranmer returning in 1596, Sandys in 1599. On his return, Sandys presented a report of their findings to Archbishop Whitgift, the patron to whom Hooker had recently dedicated the fifth book of his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. The cost of this fifth book had also been underwritten by Sandys.

Sandys's report is entitled *A Relation of the State of Religion*. It is a remarkable work. In many ways it is the European political complement to Hooker's general theory. Hooker, it could be said, had prepared the way. He had taken the bitterness out of religious controversy, expounding a general philosophy for a time when "these fruitless jars and janglings" should cease. Sandys set out the means of attainment. In Europe, and especially in France, he had discovered, he said, men "not many in number" indeed, "but sundry of them of singular learning and piety," who wished, "when the flames of controversy might be extinguished and some tolerable peace re-established in the Church again," to reunite Christendom in "one general and indifferent confession and sum of faith, an uniform liturgy, a correspondent form of Church government." The first nucleus of such a reunion could, he thought, be provided by an alliance of the Protestant

Churches of Europe with the Gallican Catholics of France.

The bridge upon which all these could meet was the Church of England; for "in their more sober moods," European Catholics acknowledged England to be "the only nation that walk the right way of justifiable reformation." With its unbroken continuity of form and doctrine, "concurring with neither side, yet revered of both," the Church of England was "the fitter and abler to work unity between them and to be an umpire and director, swayer of all." Finally, although the "papist" Catholics of Spain and Italy seemed beyond recovery, what of the Greek Churches of the East, who preserved their faith under Ottoman tyranny? Sandys had not visited the East, but his knowledge of history and his experience of the Greek churches in Venice convinced him that they too should be brought in. A few years later his younger brother

George Sandys would make a tour of the Levant and report extensively on his experiences there.

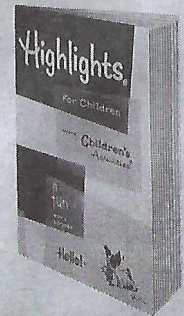
It was in 1599 that Edwin Sandys presented the manuscript of his work to Archbishop Whitgift. Nothing happened. It was not even published. Whitgift was now old and half-paralyzed. Next year Hooker died, aged forty-six, the last three books of his work still unpublished. In the same year Cranmer was killed in Ireland. Five years later Sandys published his report. Three impressions were eagerly bought up in three months. Then the Court of High Commission stepped in. The book was condemned and burned at Paul's cross, and would not be printed again until Sandys was dead, twenty-four years hence. Hooker's last three books would not see the light for over fifty.

What had happened? We do not know. We can only speculate. Perhaps

the church authorities hesitated to provoke the cry of "popery." In the last year of Hooker's life, the English Puritans had struck back at him. They had accused him of various and horrible crimes: of exalting natural reason above Scripture, preferring Aristotle to Calvin, making light of important doctrinal differences, impiously ascribing to God "a general inclination... that all men might be saved," and leading men by his indecently sophisticated style "to fall either flatly to atheism or backwards to popery." And perhaps it was unfortunate that Sandys's *Relation* was published in the very month of the Gunpowder Plot. After that famous episode, agreement with Catholics of any kind was not to be thought of.

That was one possible objection. But there was also another, of an opposite tendency. In the years after the accession of the Stuart dynasty there was a gradual change in the philosophy of the

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Anglican Church. Whitgift gave way to Bancroft, Bancroft ultimately to Laud. It was the reign of the high Anglicans, the "Arminians," organized as a party under James I, all-powerful under Charles I. In this new climate of opinion, Hooker's work began to seem weak and old-fashioned. Already offensive to Low Churchmen for its conciliation of popery, it now became suspect to High Churchmen for the modesty of its claims. In particular, these new "Arminians" who approved of Hooker's theological liberalism, and paid lip service to his achievement as the great doctor of their Church, had doubts about his ecumenism and strong objections to his political philosophy.

The idea of an ecumenical Church, an international alliance of some Catholics and some Protestants and perhaps the Greek churches of the East under the leadership of the Church of England, was held by many well-intentioned Christians in the reigns of James I and Charles I. One of these was the great Venetian historian and patriot, Fra

Anglican doctrine and quotes a relevant passage from "a book on Ecclesiastical Polity published in England"; that is, from Hooker. Since Grotius could not read English, this passage must have been drawn to his attention—probably by Andrewes, who now had custody of some of Hooker's unpublished manuscripts.

The plans for the reunion of the Churches under the headship of the Church of England came, in the end, to nothing. Andrewes and Overall might have favored them, but events were against them. In Europe, in the Thirty Years War, religious differences were sharpened, not reduced, and in England, in the 1630s, Archbishop Laud turned his back resolutely on the whole idea of reunion. In vain Grotius sought to engage him in his schemes. Neither foreign Protestants nor foreign Catholics were of interest to that rigid and purely English churchman. Whatever lip service he might occasionally feel obliged to pay to ecumenical ideals, Laud's ideal was an exclusive, national



Paolo Sarpi, who annotated an Italian translation of Sandys's *Relation* as propaganda for the purpose. Another was Isaac Casaubon, the French Huguenot scholar who, after the assassination of Henri IV and the end of ecumenical ideas in France, found asylum and favor at the court of James I. A third was one of the closest friends of Casaubon, a man whose name is often joined with that of Hooker, as a fellow philosopher of natural law, the Dutch Arminian Hugo Grotius. Grotius saw himself as the heir of his fellow-countryman Erasmus, and throughout his life his principal aim was the reunion of the Churches, on an "Arminian"—that is an Erasmian—base. Like Casaubon, like Sarpi, like Sandys—whose work he afterward read and wished to translate into Dutch—Grotius too saw the Church of England as the natural head of such an alliance.

In 1613 Grotius came to England, officially in order to regulate Anglo-Dutch trade, unofficially in order to press his scheme for reunion. He discussed the project with the "Arminian" clergy at the English court, Lancelot Andrewes and John Overall. His letters from England are full of his plans. In one letter he refers, to the exponents of

Church.

Even more unfashionable, in those years of Laudian rule, were Hooker's ideas on government, both in Church and State. For Hooker believed with Aquinas that kings ruled by common consent, that the origin of government was by implied social compact, and that the government of the Church, even episcopacy itself, was a matter of convenience only. These ideas, implicit in his first five books, were stated explicitly in parts of the last three. They could hardly appeal to the high-flying theorists of Stuart absolutism with their insistence on the divine right of kings and the divine institution of episcopacy.

Thus, if we look into its historical context, the fate of Hooker's great work is easily explained. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, he had advocated a tolerant, liberal, rational church within the structure of a tolerant, liberal, rational society. Although his views were expressed in English, in the context of an English controversy, they were of general application and were intended to provide the philosophy for a reunited Christendom. His disciples, who had been deeply involved in his work, sought to apply those views. Logically, the next step would have been the translation of his

work into Latin, the universal language. Had Hooker lived, he would no doubt have seen to this. It was the normal practice for any philosopher who made his appeal to Europe. Bodin, Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes all wrote their main works in the vernacular, for their countrymen, but then had them published in Latin, for the world. Hooker's contemporary, the historian William Camden, urged that his work be so translated: it was, he wrote, "set forth in the English, but worthy to speak Latin." However, any such project was frustrated by events: first by Hooker's own premature death, then by the change of climate in Jacobean, and even more in Caroline, England. Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, though complete, remained only half-published; the work of his disciple was suppressed; even the published part of his work was not translated. For half a century, the clerical establishment of England, while ostentatiously venerating his name, effectively suppressed his work.

However, if the new leaders of the Church sought to bury Hooker under its tributary wreaths, there were others who sought to revive him. In 1629 a young Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, William Chillingworth, Archbishop Laud's godson, seeking, like Hooker, a solid base on which to construct a rational belief, and the model of an ecumenical Church, listened to the seductive words of a Jesuit missionary and took the plunge into popery. Then, at the Jesuit college at Douay in Flanders, he found that he was mistaken: that the claims of Counter-Reformation Rome were narrow, sectarian, and illiberal. He read Grofius, and was convinced by him. He decided that the rational faith which he sought

must be found, if anywhere, in the Church of England. So he returned to his own country, resumed its religion, and settled in the household of the young Lord Falkland at Great Tew in Oxfordshire. There he became the intellectual leader of a remarkable group of men who would afterward be famous in England. There also he wrote his credo, the *Religion of Protestants*, a book which, though far more skeptical, rests visibly on Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*.

The men who, all their lives, were held together by the shared experience of life at Great Tew were all admirers of Hooker. Some, like George Sandys, the traveler and poet, had personal connections with Hooker's circle. They were also all distrusted by the Laudian establishment. These two facts are interconnected. The men of Great Tew were distrusted because, though Anglicans, and indeed Arminians, like Laud himself, they did not accept the new rigidities of Laudianism. Like Hooker, they did not believe in the divine right of kings or bishops; like him, they believed in unity with foreign Protestants, regarded consent as the basis and justification of political power, and looked, in religion, not for mystery or unarguable infallibility, but for reason. The result was predictable. In the 1630s, none of the clergy among them received promotion from Archbishop Laud, or the laity from the King. When the Long Parliament met in November 1640, all of them were opposed to the absolutism of the King and the archbishop. They were on the side of reform.

Reform was not achieved, or not consolidated. Instead came civil war and revolution: a religious as well as a

political revolution. It was the realization, sixty years later, of the crisis which Hooker had apprehended in the 1580s. The protective monarchy had foundered, and the structure of the Anglican Church had collapsed under the blows of its Puritan enemies, who had emerged to take over its authority. The question, now as then, was, could that Church survive? Had it the intellectual conviction which could sustain its continuity of spirit when its physical continuity had been so decisively broken?

As far as the Laudians were concerned, it had not. In the great storms of the 1640s the Laudian Church went down at the first gust, and those who did not sink with it, or clamber into the obscure safety of captivity, swam severally to distant shores. In the long years of Puritan rule, not one of the high-flying careerists who had flourished in the Laudian Church took any risks, or showed any faith in a future restoration. Those who believed in such a restoration, and by their belief, and their active labors, made it possible, were not the Laudian bishops and deans and their chaplains, but the men of Great Tew: Henry Hammond, George Morley, Gilbert Sheldon, John Earle, and, among laymen, the political leader of them all, Edward Hyde. In 1660 these men would come together again, and would restore monarchy and Church, not on the broken Laudian basis of divine right but on the old foundation of compact and consent, the philosophy of Hooker.

How much Hooker meant to them in those long years of exile and preparation! What had never been done in the years of Anglican supremacy was done in those years of defeat. John Earle, at-

tending the exiled Charles II in Antwerp and Paris, at last translated Hooker's published work into Latin. Surely there is a certain heroic quality in that gesture. As Archbishop of Canterbury and Chancellor of Oxford University, the Maecenas of sound learning in England, Laud had done nothing to publish the work of the man whom he praised as the great doctor of his Church. He would fetch manuscripts from Europe and the East, set up printing presses, publish commentaries on the Old Testament and homilies by the Fathers, but the manuscripts of Hooker's work lay unprinted under his hand. But now, when that Church, having been narrowed within national limits, had been utterly extinguished, a little group of exiles was setting out its claims in the universal language and thereby claiming for it universal validity.

Meanwhile, another of the same group was using Hooker in another way. When all the mainland of Britain had been lost, Edward Hyde began in the Isles of Scilly, and continued in the island of Jersey, his great *History of the Rebellion*; and he too, in writing it, had the example of Hooker before his eyes. Hooker, in those ominous 1580s, had looked forward with apprehension to the destruction of his Church and had begun his work with a solemn exordium, defiantly registering for posterity the permanence of its claims:

Though for no other cause, yet for this: that posterity may know we have not loosely through silence permitted things to pass away as a dream, there shall be for men's information extant thus much concerning the present state of the Church of God established amongst

us, and their careful endeavour which would have upheld the same....

Hyde, in 1646, began his *History* in almost identical style:

That posterity may not be deceived by the prosperous wickedness of these times into an opinion that less than a general combination and universal apostasy in the whole nation from their religion and allegiance could in so short a time have produced such a total and prodigious alteration...and so the memory of those few who...have opposed and resisted that torrent...may lose the recompense due to their virtue... it will not be useless... to present to the world a full and clear narration....

The message implicit in this formal imitation could hardly be clearer. Hyde was stating that the crisis which Hooker had apprehended had come to pass, and that the mantle of Hooker had fallen on him.

The resemblance does not stop there. Even in his English style, even in his personal tricks of style, Hyde shows the ever-present influence of Hooker: those long, serpentine sentences majestically uncoiling, clause after clause, now smooth and sinuous, now coruscating with a sudden, sharp, malicious flicker—how can we avoid comparing it with Hooker's similarly articulated style: that style which Fuller described as "long and pithy, drawing on a whole flock of several clauses before he came to the close of a sentence," and which is equally capable of grave irony and quick malice?

Like Hooker, Hyde wrote a work of controversy: his *History* was directed against the Parliamentary propaganda of Tom May just as Hooker's *Laws* had been directed against the Puritan propaganda of Walter Travers. But like Hooker he was determined to rise above controversy, to look beyond present misfortunes, and to produce a long-term validation of the English monarchy that would win support from an uncommitted posterity. Such an aim entailed magnanimity to great adversaries. Just as Hooker would praise Calvin as "incomparably the wisest man that ever the French Church did enjoy," so Hyde would praise John Hampden and Oliver Cromwell, being resolved, as he wrote, to do equal justice to all men on whichever side they fought, or fell.

Incidentally, the fate of the two works was also curiously similar. The publication of Hyde's *History*, like that of Hooker's *Laws*, would be at the mercy of politics. It too first appeared

in full over fifty years after its author's death. And in it too political partisans were quick to allege improper interpolations.

### III

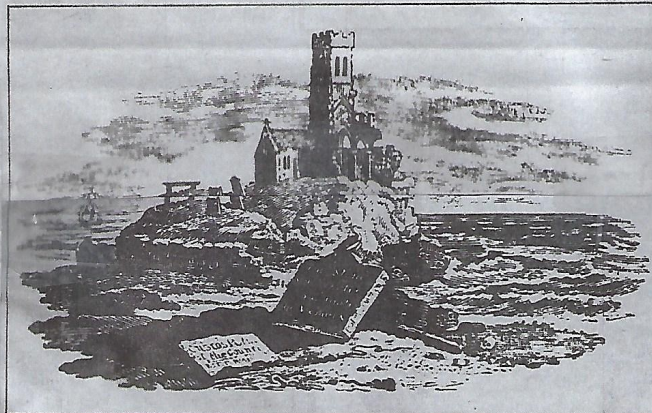
If Hooker thus supplied the inspiration of the defeated Anglicans in the 1640s and 1650s, it was natural that he should share their triumph in 1660. "True it is," wrote Thomas Fuller, immediately after the Restoration, "his book in our late times was beheld as an old almanack grown out of date; but blessed be God there now a Revolution, which may bring his works again into reputation." And so we are not surprised that in 1662, when Hyde, Sheldon, and Morley ruled State and Church, Hooker's great work was at last published in full; and when a new life of the author was re-

quired, that Sheldon's friend and fellow fisherman, Izaak Walton, should be brought in to write it. Sheldon supplied the documents; the *Life* was written in Morley's episcopal palace at Farnham. Meanwhile Earle, as Bishop of Salisbury, was finishing his Latin translation, and Hyde, now Lord Chancellor and Earl of Clarendon, was waiting to ensure its publication. The great doctor of the Anglican Church had at last, it seemed, been canonized.

Alas, canonization is a ticklish process which often requires some judicious tampering with the evidence. Any revolution is a nasty business which hardens men's hearts and narrows their minds. If all had gone according to plan in 1641—if the Laudians had been defeated and the Church saved—then, perhaps, the ideas of Hooker would have been accepted in their entirety. But after nearly twenty years of "blood and confusion," things could never be the same, and we have to admit that, in 1660, the temper of the old liberals of Great Tew, having been soured by events, was much nearer to that of the old Laudians than that of their old selves. In 1641—even in 1647—Hyde and Sheldon, Morley and Earle, and their friends, had accepted Hooker's philosophy in full. They had believed in mixed monarchy, liberal

the work, the fame of her unworldly husband. To Hooker, wrote "honest Tom Fuller," his wife was "neither to his comfort when living nor his credit when dead." She was foisted on him by her impecunious grasping mother, says the innocent Izaak Walton, and accepted by him because he was too saintly to recognize her moral faults, and too short-sighted to see her ill looks. She dragged him from his studies, obliged him to rock cradles and mind sheep, and when he died, "stayed not long to bewail her widowhood," and handed his true works over to the ideological enemy in order to be turned into Puritan propaganda. She was, says that crusted college bachelor Antony Wood, "a clownish silly woman and withal a mere Xantippe." And once she had been given a bad name, it stuck. It was so convenient. It explained all. Immortalized in Izaak Walton's *Life of Hooker*, it was reprinted, in that famous *Life*, in every edition of Hooker's works: an essential brick in the temple erroneously reared to an imaginary high Anglican saint.

Happily, all that is over now. Women, and particularly the wives of scholars, will be glad to know that time, the mother of truth, has vindicated Mrs. Hooker, at least from the gravest of these aspersions. In 1940 C.J. Sisson,



episcopacy, comprehension, consensus, a rational faith, an ecumenical Church. After 1649—after the execution of the King and the destruction of their Church—their temper, or that of their party, had changed; and so they required that Hooker change too. In particular, they needed to disown those last three books of Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* which, for half a century after their author's death, had been so zealously suppressed.

So a convenient fiction was devised. Those last books, it was now said, were not the works of the saint, but apocryphal works posthumously fathered upon him by Puritan schemers. How else can you explain the "poisonous assertions" about the origin of bishops and kings? In order to explain this obvious imposture, it was necessary to look for a scapegoat; and the scapegoat which conveniently offered itself, like that timely ram which emerged from the thicket to replace Isaac on the sacrificial altar, was the unfortunate Mrs. Hooker. For nearly three centuries Mrs. Hooker has been immolated, a substitute victim, in the cause of high-Anglican hagiography.

How can I, at the tail-end of an essay, presume to reiterate the sad tale of the posthumous denigration of Mrs. Hooker? In all mid-seventeenth-century accounts, she appears as the villain of the story, destroying the peace of mind,

by a splendid piece of scholarly research, showed how this libel had arisen, after the death of Hooker and Mrs. Hooker, directly or indirectly out of a series of disagreeable lawsuits with which they personally had nothing to do. Incidentally, out of those same lawsuits, Sisson produced evidence about the publication and history of Hooker's work which reactivated the whole industry of Hooker scholarship. The smooth image of three centuries, so carefully composed in the 1660s, thereupon began to crumble, and a new and truer appreciation became possible. Of that industry the solid result is this great American enterprise which we now celebrate.

Such a celebration is particularly appropriate to these ecumenical days. For the work which we are celebrating was attacked, in its own time, for qualities which we respect in ours. Today, as we look back through the history of human thought, we find Hooker and Grotius more attractive than Calvin and Cartwright or Bancroft and Laud. Like Hooker, we wish to look past doctrinal controversies to the profounder issues which they so often concealed; and we may find ourselves in agreement with that uncomfortably isolated Roman Catholic scholar of the nineteenth century, Lord Acton. In the sixteenth century, wrote Acton, as a serious quest for a set of principles which should hold good alike under all changes of religion, "Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity* stands almost alone."