

‘THE EDIFICATION OF THE CHURCH’: RICHARD HOOKER’S THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP AND THE PROTESTANT INWARD / OUTWARD DISJUNCTION

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ABSTRACT. Sixteenth-century English Protestants struggled with the legacy left them by the Lutheran reformation: a strict disjunction between inward and outward that hindered the development of a robust theology of worship. For Luther, outward forms of worship had more to do with the edification of the neighbour than they did with pleasing God. But what exactly did ‘edification’ mean? On the one hand, English Protestants sought to avoid the Roman Catholic view that certain elements of worship held an intrinsic spiritual value; on the other hand, many did not want to imply that forms of worship were spiritually arbitrary and had a merely civil value. Richard Hooker developed his theology of worship in response to this challenge, seeking to maintain a clear distinction between the inward worship of the heart and the outward forms of public worship, while refusing to disassociate the two. The result was a concept of edification which sought to do justice to both civil and spiritual concerns, without, *pace* Peter Lake and other scholars, conceding an inch to a Catholic theology of worship.

KEY WORDS: Liturgy, Richard Hooker, John Whitgift, English Reformation, two kingdoms

Introduction: Martin Luther’s Wedge

At the heart of Luther’s protest against Rome was his insistence on driving a wedge between the inner forum of the justified conscience before God and the outward forum of just behavior toward others.¹ The purpose of this wedge, of course, was to protect the conscience from both the false confidence and the uncertain fear of works-righteousness, to separate the freely-given favour of God from the entangling mesh of rituals and penances that the medieval church required of the believer. This basic duality, stated famously at the outset of Luther’s 1520 *Freedom of a Christian*—‘A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all’ (1957: 344)—

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¹ The language of *forum internum* and *forum externum* is Calvin’s in the *Institutes* (III.19.15), as shown in Kirby (2011a), rather than Luther’s, but a similar concept underlies much of Luther’s thought, as it can be seen in Cranz (1959).

was to frame a whole string of dualities that made up Protestant theology: faith / works, justification / sanctification, inward / outward, love of God / love of neighbour, spiritual kingdom / temporal kingdom. While this disjunction, often summarized as Luther's doctrine of the 'two kingdoms' or 'two regiments' (or 'two realms', see Thompson, 1969 for a thorough discussion) was theologically necessary for all Protestants who wanted to maintain the fundamental protest against Rome, it naturally posed extraordinary challenges for the reconstruction of a Protestant ethics. Ethics, after all, is in the business of correlating these two spheres—conscience and action, duty to God and duty to neighbour.

One subset of ethics (though we may not often think of it as such) that generated particular controversy was the problem of liturgy. After all, the liturgy is something that we do outwardly with our bodies, and yet it is an expression of the inward faith of the soul; it is something that we do toward God, and yet also together with, and with inescapable ramifications for, our neighbours. This was all the more so in an age preoccupied with conformity and uniformity; how I worshipped was not my business alone, but the whole congregation's, and if the whole congregation's, perhaps the whole commonwealth's (Turrell, 2008). In this article I want to examine how the tensions embedded in Luther's binary ethical posture played themselves out in struggles over worship in Elizabethan England. The territory, of course, is familiar (to English historians at least): the Vestiarian controversies, the rising puritan protest against the ceremonials of the English church, the Admonition Controversy between John Whitgift and Thomas Cartwright, and eventually the magisterial attempt of Richard Hooker to 'resolve the conscience, and to shewe as neere as I can what in this controversie the hart is to thinke' (1977a: 34.20-21). However, it has too often been considered merely as an epistemological controversy, a question of how much worship was to be directed by the authority of Scripture, versus the authority of the magistrate or reason (cf. Porter, 1972; Perrott, 1998). This question, of course, loomed large, but was in fact secondary to—and symptomatic of—the more fundamental problem of the relation of inward and outward in worship, the problem of *edification*.

John Whitgift's Dilemma

The language of edification came to dominate English Protestant debates over worship from the 1530s on, and was often seen as a specification of the 'law of charity,' which emerged very early on in the Protestant attempt to bridge the chasm Luther had opened up. Indeed, the concept appears already within the text of *The Freedom of a Christian*, where Luther argues that precisely because the justified Christian does not need works for his standing before God, 'Therefore he should be guided in all his works by this thought and contemplate this one thing alone, that he may serve and benefit others in all that he does, considering nothing except the need and advantage of his neighbor' (1957: 364-65). Luther himself quickly applies this concept to worship, arguing that Christian liturgical prac-

tice should be guided first and foremost by the criterion of what builds up (edifies) or tears down the neighbour, especially the weaker brother (1957: 373). Somewhat surprisingly, then, even worship of God was to be regulated chiefly by the horizontal criterion of the neighbour’s edification, rather than the vertical criterion of the glory of God (see Verkamp, 1975).

Transposed into the much more political context of the English reformation, the law of charity and the rule of edification were quickly seen as oriented chiefly toward the maintenance of social order (see Starkey, 1973, Gardiner, 1930). This emphasis was to change little among conformist apologists over the next forty years, so that we find John Whitgift insisting to Thomas Cartwright in the *Answer to the Admonition*: ‘Such lawes and orders as keep godly peace and unity in the church do edify; but the laws for apparel keep godly peace and unity in the church; ergo, they edify’ (1850: 61). For Whitgift, the term ‘edification’ had been evacuated of almost any positive meaning beyond that of ‘order and comeliness,’ conceived in terms of uniformity, civil order, and procedural efficiency. To the extent he is willing to go beyond this and speak of an inner ‘edification’ of the soul, he insists that the liturgical ceremonies can only have accomplish this *per accidens*: e.g., having been established by the Queen’s command as prerequisites for the ministry of word and sacrament, the clerical vestments are ‘edifying’ inasmuch as this ministry is edifying (1849: 71; 1852: 59). Of course, this is circular; for such an argument, not only is there is no need to demonstrate that the particular orders of worship prescribed by law are regulated by Scripture (the issue scholars of the Admonition Controversy have usually focused on), but neither is there any need to demonstrate that they are particularly conducive to devotion, holiness, understanding of God, etc. Naturally, this rankled the Puritans with their zeal for individual sanctification, but it also sat in some tension with the rich liturgical vision of the *Book of Common Prayer*. It was little compliment to Cranmer to suggest that the fruit of all his liturgical labours had been more or less arbitrary, with no intrinsic role in stirring up devotion.

Why should Whitgift back himself into such a corner? Well clearly one concern was his desire to prevent the unrestrained exercise of private judgment (Perrott, 1998: 45). Start talking about whether this or that ceremony is more conducive to reverent worship or more effectively aids true devotion, and you may soon have as many opinions as you do worshippers, Whitgift fears. To concede this, to suggest that there might be an independent bar at which the case between conformist and puritan could be tried, was to shake the very foundations of Tudor government. To be sure, the Puritans insisted that their opinions on such matters were closely regulated by Scripture the standard that all Elizabethan Protestants shared, specifically by four ‘general rules’ out of Paul the apostle: 1. that none be offended (1 Corinthians 10:32); 2. that all be done ‘in order and comeliness’ (1 Corinthians 14:40); 3. that all be done to edification; 4. that all be done to the glory of God (Cartwright, 1574: 15). As Daniel Eppley (2007) has noted, however, this did not

mean that conformists did not think that edification was regulated by Scripture; rather, they tended to insist that another rule out of apostle Paul governed all others, namely Romans 13:1. From Whitgift's standpoint, it was unthinkable that Paul could have intended these four rules to serve as principles that each individual could apply at his own discretion, since this would contradict Paul's injunctions to obey the prince in all indifferent matters (Eppley, 2007: 152-154).

The difference between Whitgift and Cartwright at this point is thus more nuanced than many commentators have realized. Cartwright acknowledges that many, at least, of the matters under dispute are *adiaphora*, 'things indifferent' in themselves, but insists that these must be concretely used 'as the circumstances of the times and persons, and profit or hurt of our brethren,' require (1574: 52). Whitgift agrees, but 'with this proviso, that it is not every man's part in the church to judge and determine what the circumstance of the times and persons maketh profitable or hurtful (for then should we never be quiet), but theirs only to whom the government of the church is committed' (1850: 3). Whitgift, in this following the precedent of Archbishop Matthew Parker in the Vestiarian controversy, insists that this criterion of edification can only be used as a yardstick for weighing potential courses of action *before* laws have been imposed (cf. Parker, 1566: 10v). Once a law has been imposed, the rule of edification still applies, to be sure; however, we may assume that of all courses of action, the *most unedifying*, the most unloving to our brothers, would surely be disobedience to the law. Whitgift can therefore assume that the established laws are *ipso facto* edifying.

To say otherwise would be to suggest that it should be up to each Christian, or at any rate each Christian minister, to decide for himself whether the established laws were beneficial for the church. Therefore, the standard conformist line was that private Christian citizens simply were not to concern themselves with all such questions regarding indifferent matters, and that they were indeed to assume that most matters were indifferent. By the time we reach Bancroft's Paul's Cross sermon, comments Peter Lake, 'There was, in short, virtually no need for any active interest in doctrine on the part of the laity, since God had promised his church to enlighten the learned "to whose godly determination in matters of question her dutiful children ought to submit themselves without any curious or wilful contradiction"' (Lake, 1988: 128, quoting Bancroft, 1589: 42; see further Littlejohn, 2014a).

Before judging such empty conformism too harshly, however, we must recognize that this transposition of edification into a merely political key was reinforced by deeply-rooted theological assumptions, as Peter Lake highlighted in his landmark work *Anglicans and Puritans* (1988: 39-40, 46-47, 123-125; cf. also Coolidge, 1970: 44-46). We have noted above that Whitgift, in opposition to any hint of a Catholic liturgical theology, insists that the Word alone, and no outward ceremonies, can draw the soul closer to God; ceremonies can only aid this *per accidens*, and are largely interchangeable. To speak of 'edification' beyond this context,

then, is to speak only of external social relations, which are largely the concern of the civil magistrate anyway. Thus ‘edification’ can be either spoken of in wholly inward or wholly outward sense, and in the outward sense, it stands to reason that, in a sixteenth-century context at least, uniformity and public order will loom very large indeed.

While Lake attributes Whitgift’s outlook here largely to an almost fatalistic high Calvinist predestinarianism, equally important, I would suggest, is his staunchly Lutheran insistence on the disjunction between inward and outward. Neither must the visible government of the church be conflated with Christ’s invisible spiritual government, nor must the visible congregation be conflated with the elect:

There are two kinds of government in the church, the one invisible, the other visible; the one spiritual, the other external. The invisible and spiritual government of the church is, when God by his Spirit, gifts, and ministry of his word, doth govern it, by ruling in the hearts and consciences of men, and directing them in all things necessary to everlasting life: this kind of government indeed is necessary to salvation, and it is in the church of the elect only. The visible and external government is that which is executed by man, and consisteth of external discipline, and visible ceremonies practised in that church, and over that church, that containeth in it both good and evil, which is usually called the visible church of Christ, and compared by Christ to ‘a field’ wherein both ‘good seeds’ and ‘tares were sown,’ and to ‘a net that gathered of all kind of fishes’ (1849: 183-184).

This two-kingdoms disjunction between visible and invisible appears throughout Whitgift’s theology, and is indeed for him an essential bulwark of evangelical doctrine. We find this, for instance, in his treatment of vestments, a hotly disputed item in the liturgical debates of Elizabeth’s reign. The precisianists, of course, had argued that while it was all very well that the vestments and ceremonies were not actually being prescribed for papist reasons, why give the appearance of evil? To the common people, they looked papist, so should they not be done away with? Should the visible form of the church not be made, as much as possible, to conform to pure doctrine, which needed nothing of such outward trappings? Whitgift responds, on the contrary, that things indifferent must not be abrogated as soon as they are abused, for this will imply that they are not indifferent in fact, depriving ministers of the valuable teaching opportunity to instruct their congregations in this ‘necessary’ doctrine. It is not lamentable that outward and inward do not correspond perfectly, for if they did so, this would in fact fail to root out superstition, which consists in attaching a higher spiritual value to outward things than rightly belongs to them (Whitgift, 1850: 42, 73).

Thus, however ‘mealy-mouthed’ (Lake, 1988: 164) his theology of ‘edification *per accidens*’ might sound, Whitgift actually felt theologically constrained to say no more than this, for nothing external should be said to edify of itself—‘only the Holy Ghost on this sort doth edify by the ministry of the word’ (1850: 56). When, on a couple of occasions in his argument, Whitgift attempts to go further than

this, he runs up against the Protestant hesitancy to attach any definite spiritual value to liturgical ceremonies, and Cartwright is only too willing to alert Whitgift to his difficulty. When the latter suggests, quoting no less an authority than Peter Martyr Vermigli, that white vestments may signify that ministers are like angels, God's messengers, Cartwright seizes upon this, saying that if this were true, then Whitgift can no longer claim them as *adiaphora*:

by this means [they] not only make it an ecclesiastical ceremony, but also a matter of conscience. For, if so be that the white apparel of the minister have any force either to move the people or the minister unto greater pureness, or to any other godliness whatsoever, then it is that which ought to be commanded, and to be obeyed of necessity (Cartwright, 1574: 59; cf. Cartwright, 1577: 228-230).

Cartwright goes on, maintaining that if the church has power to attach such religious significations, then this is power to 'institute new sacraments,' a charge he repeats later in the argument when Whitgift hesitantly suggests an edifying signification for the use of a wedding ring (1851: 354).

Thus fenced in by his own principles, it is little wonder that Whitgift proves so quick to fall back on bare magisterial authority to defend the established polity and ceremonies of the English church, or, despite his rejection of Cartwright's biblicalism, to fall to protracted exegetical wrangling with Cartwright about the biblical precedent for some ceremony or other. What he cannot do with any consistency, worried as he is by the legalism and perfectionism implicit in the Puritan concept of sanctification, is to offer a compelling case for the sanctifying value of the English liturgy.

In the hands of conformists like Whitgift, Luther's highly dynamic concepts of charity and edification, by which he sought to bridge the two realms of conscience and behavior, had become decidedly cold and static. Where Luther's liberated conscience was busy and active, using its freedom indefatigably to seek out how the neighbour could be served in every circumstance, Whitgift's was a passive and quietist one, meekly accepting the greater wisdom of authority to determine what love demanded. The puritan protest of the 1560s-1580s could thus claim to be carrying forward the legacy of Luther's insistence that Christian liberty is a freedom *for* the neighbour. This protest might have lacked the ring of authenticity by the highly legalistic form in which it was often lodged, but the puritan challenge to conformists was often a reasonable one: prove that these 'indifferent' ceremonies are edifying, and we will submit. Christian liberty, on this construction, could rightly be maintained in the midst of submission to law only if believers could recognize that the laws were good laws, laws that would build up the church, strengthen it and make it grow in righteousness; only thus could law-obedience be sure to be an exercise of charity.

In Whitgift's strictly dualistic version of the two-kingdoms doctrine, a minimalistic account of 'things necessary to salvation' faced off against a totally indifferent

realm of outward ceremonies to which he hesitated to attribute any spiritual value, or any concrete value at all aside from its contribution to *civil* order and *decorum* (see Lake, 1988: 45-46, 123). This public order simply *is* edification. Obviously this argument entails a kind of circular reasoning: why require these orders and ceremonies? Because they are edifying. Why are they edifying? Because they are required. Clearly, if anything that establishes uniform civil order is thereby edifying, any ceremony that does so is as good as another, and there is no good reason for the particular ones that have been established, particularly if they were stumbling blocks to the weak. In the standard conformist defense, as Lake observes, ‘the ceremonies were... denied any directly religious function or significance. They were there because they were there and because order and uniformity and obedience were all good things in themselves the ordinary Christian should simply do what he or she was told’ (Lake, 1988: 164).

Richard Hooker’s Reconciliation

The conformist case thus found itself in a weak and ambiguous position by the time Hooker took up his pen, despite the political defeat of the Puritans. Not only that, but it found itself having dangerously compromised the Protestant vision of faith as a ‘living, busy, active, mighty thing’ (Luther, 1960: XXXV; 370), animating a church full of Christians who exercised their spiritual freedom in eager, open-eyed, conscientious regard for one another; in its place, they threatened to substitute a form of the hated papist doctrine of ‘implicit faith,’ suitably transposed into the key of political religion.²

It was one of Hooker’s great accomplishments to attempt to reintroduce, even in the midst of critiquing private judgment and defending conformity, an element of voluntary, rational, conscious acceptance of the established orders on the part of subjects. One of the chief ways in which Hooker sought to do this was by rehabilitating the concept of edification, showing a willingness to argue that many of the disputed ceremonies *are* of real concrete spiritual benefit to believers, and are not merely ‘there because they are there.’ Whereas Cartwright and the precisianists, by virtue of their demand for ‘edification,’ required that even in matters of adiaphora, our ceremonies be framed in accord with Scripture (for how else could one know what is spiritually upbuilding?), Hooker argues that reason may play a role as well. And yet in doing so, Hooker was ready to meet the puritan challenge head-on and demonstrate that the ceremonies contributed to more than mere social stability. This argument meant linking the realm of inward grace with that of

2 Lake concludes his discussion of conformism: ‘Thus by 1593 the conformist avant-garde (in the persons of Saravia and Bancroft) found itself teetering on the edge of religious quietism and political absolutism. Both tendencies had been apparent in Whitgift’s reply to Cartwright, but now in the works of his protégé Bancroft they seemed to have established a position of dominance’ (1988: 139).

outward ceremony, and hence required a very careful parsing of the relationship between the two kingdoms. In the course of Hooker's doctrine of edification, then, we will be able to clearly discern the fundamental contours of his theology of the two kingdoms and the relationship of nature and grace.

This is quite an important line of inquiry for Hooker studies, given the ongoing debates over Hooker's fidelity to the magisterial Reformation and the extent to which he might be considered architect of an Anglican *via media* (see Littlejohn, 2014b). One of the fundamental elements of this putative *via media* is its attempt to soften the sharp Protestant inward / outward disjunction highlighted at the beginning, along with all its corollaries: justification / sanctification, invisible church / visible church, spiritual kingdom / temporal kingdom, etc. In particular, Anglican sacramental and liturgical theology is generally taken to tilt back at least somewhat in a Catholic direction, by emphasizing how these visible media serve as channels of grace, linking together the realm of human activity in community with the realm of the conscience before God.

At present the two leading models for interpreting Richard Hooker's theology remain those of Peter Lake, articulated in his 1988 *Anglicans and Puritans*, and of Torrance Kirby, presented in his 1990 *Richard Hooker's Doctrine of the Royal Supremacy*, and numerous articles and book chapters since (see also Kirby, 1997; Kirby, 1999; Kirby, 2005). Whereas Kirby lays great stress on the centrality of a Lutheran 'two realms' or 'two kingdoms' doctrine that anchors Hooker's theology, framing it in terms of the various dualities we have mentioned, Lake and his school have read Hooker as deliberately seeking to soften this dialectic, blurring the lines between the spiritual and civil realms. Kirby certainly makes a compelling case for his basic schema based on the very clear language of visible / invisible disjunction that Hooker offers at the outset of Book III of the *Laws* and at various points in Book VIII; Kirby has also suggested that the Christological concepts carefully laid out in Book V of the laws (with a constant emphasis on *distinction* without *separation*) govern the logic of Hooker's doctrine of the two realms. In this doctrine, Kirby shows, Hooker resolutely placed matters of church order and most questions of liturgy within the civil realm, with matters of faith and doctrine in the spiritual realm. This would appear to condemn Hooker to the same unsatisfying conformist line about edification—ceremonies edify insofar as they conduce to civil order and peace, but that is all.

Peter Lake, however, has argued that Hooker departs sharply from this line, and in this departure we can see the beginnings of his 'invention of Anglicanism' (1988: 227; cf. Lake, 2001; Lake, 2003) as he attributes to liturgical ceremonies a real spiritual significance, rather than mere social benefits. By attending carefully, then, to Hooker's theology of edification, we can make some important progress toward adjudicating this interpretive dispute between Lake and Kirby.

First we may note that Hooker is certainly far from denying the general conformist insistence on the edifying function of ceremonies that foster civil order

and peace. However, even here, he seeks to provide a broader foundation for this claim, repeatedly expounding the benefits of beauty, dignity, and order in purely civil affairs. But he is also willing to go further. At the outset of Book IV, he offers a careful definition of ‘edification,’ one which will underlie his whole subsequent defence of English liturgical ceremonies:

The end which is aimed at in setting down the outward forme of all religious actions is the edification of the Church. Now men are edified, when either their understanding is taught somewhat whereof in such actions it behoveth all men to consider, or when their harts are moved with any affection suteable therunto, when their minds are in any sorte stirred up unto that reverence, devotion, attention and due regard, which in those cases semeth requisite. Because therfore unto this purpose not only speech but sundry sensible meanes besides have alwaies bene thought necessary, and especially those meanes which being object to the eye, the liveliest and the most apprehensive sense of all other, have in that respect seemed the fittest to make a deepe and a strong impression (Hooker, 1977a: 273.30-274.8).

In other words, unlike Whitgift, who reflected the Protestant suspicion of the senses in applying the language of edification, strictly speaking, only to the Word (so that vestments, for instance, edify only as prerequisites for preaching), Hooker argues that the senses *can* help to fix our minds and hearts on spiritual things. Peter Lake thinks we can scarcely overstate the significance of this claim, a move which marks Hooker out, he thinks, as the founder of Anglicanism:

This was little short of the reclamation of the whole realm of symbolic action and ritual practice from the status of popish superstition to that of a necessary, indeed essential, means of communication and edification; a means, moreover, in many ways more effective than the unvarnished word. The ceremonies, Hooker claimed, must have religious meanings. That was what they were for (1988: 165).

Lake goes on to explain how, for Hooker ‘the observances of the church, if suitably well chosen and decorous, could, through a series of correspondences, use the external realm of outward performance and ritual practice to affect the internal realm of men’s minds and characters’ (1988: 166). But if all this is so, it would seem to represent a repudiation of that very two-kingdoms distinction upon which the conformist case, and Hooker’s claim to continuity with magisterial Protestantism, so depended. And indeed, Lake is among those who claims as much, viewing Hooker’s maintenance of the visible-invisible church distinction as mere lipservice, when he really means to undermine it (1988: 180-181). Can both Lake and Kirby be right, then? By carefully attending to Hooker’s argument here, we may discover sufficient nuance to make reconciliation possible, and in so doing, better grasp how Hooker understands these two kingdoms.

Of course, if it is not already clear, it should be emphasized that these two kingdoms are not distinguished in terms of things ‘sacred’ and ‘secular’ in our

modern sense, despite frequently being misrepresented in these terms (see for instance VanDrunen, 2010). For Hooker especially, God is revealed and encountered in all the arenas of mundane civil existence; and conversely, sacred business cannot take place without using the trappings of external social and political forms. So it is that after having made the above declaration about the ‘outward forme of all religious actions,’ Hooker appeals to nature and to the common practice of all ages in ‘publique actions which are of waight whether they be civil and temporall or els spiritual and sacred’ (1977a: 274.16-18). In other words, the outward means of moving our hearts to awe and devotion in worship are not fundamentally different from the outward means of moving our hearts to awe and devotion in other settings, such as art or politics (on the relationship between worship and the commonwealth in Hooker’s thought, see Kirby, 2005: 101-104, 110-112). Puritans and papists alike will no doubt balk at this, but Hooker is a realist. We are creatures of sense, and for any great occasion or purpose, our senses need to be impressed if our hearts and minds are to be. Nor is this merely incidental; it is part and parcel of Hooker’s Dionysian cosmology (Kirby, 2005: 31-32). Having provided examples of the necessary use of sensible ceremonies in affairs both civil and religious, he quotes Pseudo-Dionysius, ‘The sensible things which Religion hath hallowed, are resemblances framed according to things spiritually understood, whereunto they serve as a hand to lead and a guide to direct’ (Hooker, 1977a: 275.21-24; IV.1.3). However, when Whitgift had made the slightest moves in this direction, Cartwright had objected that this was ‘to institute newe sacraments’ (1574: 159).

Hooker thinks that this objection has misunderstood the key function of a sacrament. This is not to serve as a visible sign of invisible things (for such signs are everywhere in human affairs), or even as a visible sign of specifically spiritual things (for Hooker believes that every creature serves as such a sign of God’s presence, manifesting the law of his being through its own law-like operations). Instead, ‘sacraments are those which are signes and tokens of some generall promised grace, which allwaies really descendeth from God unto the soul that duly receiveth them’ (Hooker, 1977a: 276.14-16). The ‘generall promise’ of grace in the sacraments establishes in their case a *necessary* connection between the outward and inward, bringing the soul into direct relationship with God; not so with the signifying ceremonies he is occupied with in most of Books IV and V.³

We find Hooker’s Dionysian theology of sign and edification elaborated in the introductory chapters of Book V. Hooker, however, is considerably more careful to maintain the two-kingdoms distinction, rightly understood, than Lake makes him out to be:

3 David Neelands (2008) offers a good discussion of Hooker’s sacramentology, confirming him to be in basic accord with Reformed doctrine on these issues.

There is an inward reasonable, and there is a sollemne outward serviceable worship belonging unto God. Of the former kinde are all manner vertuous duties that each man in reason and conscience to God-ward oweth. Sollemne and serviceable worship we name for distinction’s sake, whatsoever belongeth to the Church or publike societie of God by way of externall adoration. It is the later of these two whereupon our present question groweth (Hooker, 1977b: 31.7-14).

Every bit as much as Luther or Calvin, then, Hooker simultaneously maintains the importance of outward worship while distinguishing it clearly from the inward forum of the conscience.⁴ Between these two, there should be close correspondence and congruity, but never confusion. Hooker explains this relationship of correspondence with great care two chapters later, in a crucial passage:

if we affecte him not farre above and before all thinges, our religion hath not that inward perfection which it should have, neither doe we indeed worship him as our God. That which inwardlie each man should be, the Church outwardlie ought to testifie. And therefore the duties of our religion which are seene must be such as that affection which is unseen ought to be. Signes must resemble the thinges they signifie. If religion beare the greatest swaie in our hartes, our outward religious duties must show it, as farre as the Church hath outward habilitie. Duties of religion performed by whole societies of men, ought to have in them accordinge to our power a sensible excellencie, correspondent to the majestic of him whom we worship. Yea then are the publike duties of religion best ordered, when the militant Church doth resemble by sensible meanes, as it maie in such cases, the hidden dignitie and glorie wherewith the Church triumphant in heaven is bewtifed... Let our first demaunde be therefore, that in the externall forme of religion such thinges as are apparentlie, or can be sufficientlie proved effectuell and generallie fitt to set forwarde godlines, either as betokeninge the greatenes of God, or as beseeinge the dignitie of religion, or as concurringe with coelestiall impressions in the mindes of men, maie be reverentlie thought of (Hooker, 1977b: 33.23-34.20).

It is easy to see here why Torrance Kirby considers Hooker’s Christology to serve as the template for his understanding of the church in its two realms of existence,

4 In *Institutes* (1960: 27-32, IV.10.1-8), Calvin offers a thorough discussion of the role of church laws for government and worship and their relation to the conscience, in which he quite clearly avoids the regulative principle logic into which some English Calvinists were to fall. Church laws must not seek to prescribe the ‘true and necessary worship of God’ as the papists have done (1960: 1184; IV.10.6), so as ‘to bind souls inwardly before God’ (1960: 1181; IV.10.2), however, those done ‘for the sake of public decency’ (1960: 1206; IV.10.28), are both necessary and praiseworthy. Calvin’s description of the purpose of such rites is substantially similar to that of Hooker, belying Lake’s insistence on Hooker’s fundamental novelty: ‘But *decorum* for us will be something so fitted to the reverence of the sacred mysteries that it may be a suitable exercise for devotion, or at least will serve as an appropriate adornment of the act. And this should not be fruitless but should indicate to believers with how great modesty, piety, and reverence they ought to treat sacred things. Now, ceremonies, to be exercises of piety, ought to lead us straight to Christ’ (1960: 1206-1207; IV.10.29).

with a ‘communication of attributes’ establishing correspondence between the inward and outward realms (1990: 51-125, esp. 51-58), conjoined as they are, but without confusion, in the act of worship. The worship of the visible church is a public religious duty, which is not to be confused with the true religion of the heart, but which must never be separated from it. Through this worship, the inward reality, the ‘hidden dignitie and glory’ of the church in the presence of God, is imperfectly imaged by sensible means. These sensible ceremonies ‘testify’ to the truth, ‘signify’ spiritual realities, ‘betoken’ the greatness of God, and hence serve to ‘set forward godliness.’ In short, we might say, they serve toward *sanctification*, enlightening our hearts with better understanding of the truth, strengthening our faith, and forming our affections in the virtues of holiness. For Hooker, it appears, while ceremonies are *testimonies* to justifying grace, they cannot be said to convey it, to improve our standing in the eyes of God or merit his pleasure. Indeed, it is significant that Hooker always speaks of the beneficial effects of the ceremonies *towards us*, and never as rites in themselves pleasing to God. If this distinction is correct, then Hooker would seem, in the midst of this reclamation of ritual, to have maintained the essential Protestant protest against Rome, which revolved around the relationship of justifying and sanctifying grace, and condemned the proliferation of outward rites that were necessary to endear us to God. Thus, Lake leaves out all the important nuances in his assertion,

This reappropriation of symbolic action from the papists was in turn based upon those graded hierarchies of desire, experience and law (outlined in book I) which led man Godwards and held the realms of reason and grace, nature and supernature firmly together. By exploiting and mirroring the correspondences and links between these two realms, symbol and ritual were able to play a central role in that process whereby the church led the believer toward union with God (1988: 169).

The last phrase here represents an elision of justification and sanctification which Hooker would never make.⁵ While the Dionysian logic of mediated ascent to God does represent a significant thread in Hooker’s theology, it does so only at the level of sanctification; on justification, Hooker’s thought remains governed by an Augustinian sense of hypostatic disjunction between the two realms (see Kirby, 2005: 29-43; Kirby, 2011b). As such, the liturgy, for all its value and potential, never threatens to rise above the level of changeable adiaphora for Hooker; only its legal imposition, not its intrinsic merits, gives it any character of necessity.

5 Hooker’s doctrine of justification and sanctification has been the matter of some debate, with both Voak (2003) and Joyce (2012) suggesting that even if Hooker’s statements in *A Learned Sermon on Justification* were thoroughly consonant with Reformed theology, his mature views on the subject in the *Laws* are not. Ranall Ingalls (2008), however, has offered a convincing defense of the continuity of Hooker’s thought on justification both across his *corpus* and vis-à-vis earlier reformers.

Hooker’s concept of liturgy and ceremony, then, despite being charged with spiritual significance, remains fundamentally within the domain of nature, a domain that remained shot through with God’s presence, perhaps even ‘drenched with deity,’ as C.S. Lewis’s fulsome description has it (1954: 459). Hence Hooker’s comfort with arguing from natural law, historical consensus, and civil analogues for the value of many of the disputed ceremonies. So, when it comes to vestments, Hooker will both take the traditional line, emphasizing their essentially civil function: ‘To solemne actions of roialtie and justice theire suteable ornamentes are a bewtie. Are they onlie in religion a staine?’ (Hooker, 1977b: 123.18-19), and yet also point to a spiritual correspondence:

as also for that it suteth so fitlie with that lightsome affection of joye, wherein God delighteth when his Sainctes praise him; and so livelie resembleth the glorie of the Sainctes in heaven, together with the bewtie wherin Angels have appeared unto men... [fitting for] they which are to appear fore men in the presence of God as Angels (1977b: 127.10-15).⁶

The train of thought which ties together Hooker’s understanding of natural utility and spiritual edification appears perhaps most clearly in his treatment of music. He first eulogizes music as ‘A thinge which delighteth all ages and beseemeth all states; a thinge as seasonable in grieffe as in joy; as decent beinge added unto actions of greatest waight and solemnitie, as beinge used when men most sequester them selves from action’ (1977b: 151.10-14). It is useful for all human affairs, but not merely as ornament; so deeply does music affect us that it can contribute to our moral formation: ‘In harmonie the verie image and character even of vertue and vice is perceived, the minde delighted with theire resemblances and brought by havinge them often iterated into a love of the thinges them selves’ (Hooker, 1977b: 151.21-24). This being the case, what could be more suitable to aid our worship?

The verie harmonie of sounds beinge framed in due sorte and carryed from the eare to the spirituall faculties of our soules is by a native puissance and efficacie greatlie availeable to bringe to a perfect temper whatsoever is there troubled... In which considerations the Church of Christ doth likewise at this present daie reteine it as an ornament to Gods service, and an helpe to our own devotion (Hooker, 1977b: 152.5-8, 19-21).

Equally fascinating is Hooker’s treatment of festival days. Whereas Whitgift had confined himself to insisting ‘The magistrate hath power and authority over his subjects in all external matters, and bodily affairs; wherefore he may call them

6 Note that the comparison of the white vestments to angels is one that we have already seen in Whitgift (1850: 63).

from bodily labour or compel them unto it, as shall be thought to him most convenient' (1850: 70), Hooker justifies them via an elaborate disquisition on the nature of time, and the rhythms of rest and action appropriate to all created beings. All nature, and even heathen peoples, therefore testify 'that festivall solemnities are a parte of the publique exercise of religion' (1977b: 365.29-30), and besides, he adds, working his way through the church year holiday by holiday, they are of great importance to 'keepe us in perpetuall remembrance' (1977b: 367.19-20), of God's redeeming work. Therefore, 'the verie law of nature it selfe which all men confess to be Godes law requireth in generall no lesse the sanctification of times then of places persons and thinges unto Godes honor' (1977b: 368.30-369.2).

Conclusion

For Hooker, then, the ceremonies of the church are simultaneously (though distinctly) civil, natural, and spiritual; there is no need to categorize them as simply one or the other. As civil institutions concerned with outward order, they take their force from the command of the magistrate, who has lawful authority over such matters. As institutions fitting according to the order of nature, they can be determined by reason, which serves to identify their value and to make them useful in their particular times and places. And as institutions tending toward the cultivation of spiritual virtue and reverence, they serve not merely to preserve public order, but for the dynamic upbuilding of the people of God that the puritans had demanded. Hooker, then, would appear to have made substantial progress toward unravelling the Gordian knot of edification, retaining a Protestant distinction of inward and outward while closely correlating the two.

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