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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

The Paradigm of Chalcedonian Christology in Richard Hooker's Discourse on Grace and the Church

W J Torrance Kirby

For as much as there is no union of God with man without that meane betweene both which is both, it seemeth requisite [to] consider how God is in Christ, then how Christ is in us. (*Lawes* 5.50.3)

In the dedicatory preface to the fifth book of his treatise *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie*, Richard Hooker remarks that 'the weightiest conflicts the Church hath had were those which touched the head, the person of our Saviour Christ, and the next of importance those questions which are at this date [ie the period of the Reformation and its aftermath] betweene us and the Church of Rome about the actions of the body of the church of God ...' (*FLE* 2:2.15-19). The great actions of the church disputed in the sixteenth century have to do principally with the manner and the means of our participation in God's own life. The communication of God's grace to humanity was opened up to rigorous scrutiny in Luther's formulation of the doctrine of justification by faith alone. The doctrine of the church was radically recast as a logical consequence of the rethinking of the doctrine of salvation. Both the soteriology and the ecclesiology of the Reformation are intimately linked to that weightier conflict touching the manner of the union of God and man in one Christ. Indeed Chalcedonian christological orthodoxy provides a governing paradigm for the reformers in their fundamental approach to these questions.

Hooker in particular is highly conscious of the importance of this link between Christology on the one hand and the doctrines of salvation and the church on the other. As he points out in his introduction to a discussion of the sacraments, it is first necessary to consider how God is in Christ in order to consider how Christ is in us. According to his wonderfully Aristotelian formulation:

God is the last final cause of our working... Nothing may be infinitely desired but that good which in deed is infinite, and no good is infinite but God: therefore he [is] our felicitie and blisse. If then we be blessed, it is

by force of *participation* and conjunction with him ... Then are we happy therefore when fully we enjoy God, as an object wherein the powers of our soules are satisfied even with everlasting delight: so that although we be men, yet by being unto God united we live as it were the life of God. (*Lawes* 1.11.1)

For Hooker, indeed as for the other magisterial reformers – Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Bullinger and the rest – the question of the manner and means of this complete union of souls with God is rooted ultimately in the interpretation of the cardinal doctrine ‘that God is in Christ by the personal incarnation of the Sonne who is very God’ (*Lawes* 5.51.1).

Christology and the Doctrine of Salvation

The logic of reformed soteriology appears, at least initially, paradoxical. How can the grace of justification leave man still in the condition of a sinner? How can there be a perfect and immediate imputation of Christ’s righteousness while, at the same time, the soul must acquire the virtues by degrees in an incremental progress towards sanctification? How do these two kinds of righteousness of the reformed theology of grace, namely justification and sanctification, remain wholly distinct and yet continue in unity both in their source, that is to say in Christ, and in the souls of Christian believers? For Hooker, this is no paradox, but rather the very consequence of the manner in which the human nature of Christ is joined to his divinity. The doctrine of the hypostatic union is represented by him as the objective means of salvation. As he observes: ‘There is cause sufficient why divine nature should assume human nature, that so God might be in Christ reconciling to him self the world.’¹ For Hooker, the precise theological definition of the perfect union between the two natures is authoritatively defined by the orthodox Christology summarized at the Council of Chalcedon in 451.² The so-called Chalcedonian definition had significant implications for the

1 *Lawes* 5.51.3. All references to *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie*, cited hereafter as *Lawes*, are taken from the authoritative *Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker (FLE)*, ed W Speed Hill, 6 vols (London and Cambridge, Mass 1977-93). In this essay, the convention of referring to the treatise as the ‘*Lawes*’ is observed. References indicate the subdivisions of Hooker’s text into book, chapter, and section originated by John Keble in his own critical edition of *The Works of that Learned and Judicious Divine Mr Richard Hooker (HW)*, 3 vols, ed John Keble, 7th ed revised by R W Church and F Paget (Oxford 1888).

2 See *Lawes* 5.54.10

subsequent interpretation of the union between Christ and fallen humanity as defined by reformed soteriology. Hooker's account of patristic christological orthodoxy is succinct and concise; it is worth citing this summary at length:

To gather therefore into one summe all that hetherto hath bene spoken touchinge this pointe, there are but fower things which concurre to make compleate the whole state of our Lord Jesus Christ, his deitie, his manhood, the conjunction of both, and the distinction of the one from the other beinge joyned in one. Fower principall heresies there are which have in those things withstood the truth, Arians by bendinge them selves against the deitie of Christ; Apollinarians by maiminge and misinterpretinge that which belongeth to his humane nature; Nestorians by rentinge Christ asunder and devidinge him into two persons; the followers of Eutiches by confoundinge in his person those natures which they should distinguish. Against these there have bene fower most famous ancient generall Councils, the Council of Nice to define against the Arians, against Apollinarians the Council of Constantinople, the Council of Ephesus against Nestorians, against Eutichians the Chalcedon Council. In fower word ἀληθῶς, τελῶς, ἀδιαίρετως, ἀσυγχύτως, *truly, perfectly, indivisibly, distinctly*; the frst applyed to his beinge God, and the seconde to his beinge man, the third to his beinge of both one, and the fowrth to his still continuinge in that one both, wee may fullie by way of abridgment comprise whatsoever antiquitie hath at large handled either in declaration of Christian beliefe or in refutation of the foresaid heresies. Within the compasse of which fower heades I may trulie affirme, that all heresies, which touch but the person of Jesus Christ, whether they have risen in these later days, or in any age heretofore, may be with great facilitie brought to confine them selves.

Following this summary of the christological controversies of the early church, Hooker devotes a substantial chapter to an explanation of the continuing integrity of both the human and divine natures such 'that by the union of the one with the other nature in Christ there groweth neither, gaine nor losse of essential properties in either'.³ Christ's assumption of manhood does not abolish or destroy in any way the characteristics peculiar and

3 Lawes 5.53.1

essential to human nature. Union of the natures subsists in the category of ‘personhood’:

The sequell of which conjunction of natures in the person of Christ is no abolishment of naturall properties apperteing to either substance, no transition or transmigration thereof out of one substance into an other, finallie no such mutuall infusion as reallie causeth the same naturall operations or properties to be made common unto both substances, but whatsoever is naturall to deitie the same remayneth in Christ uncommunicated unto his manhood, and whatsoever naturall to manhood his deitie thereof is incapable.⁴

Thus also in Christ’s *soteriological* union with fallen humanity, there is ‘no abolishment of the naturall properties’ which constitute that nature.⁵ This doctrine is invoked by Hooker in his marginal notes on the accusation of *A Christian Letter* to the effect that he taught the doctrine of free will.⁶ The issue concerns the relation between divine grace and human free will. Hooker had argued in the first book of the *Lawes* that ‘there is in the will of man naturallie that freedome, whereby it is apt to take or refuse anie particular object, whatsoever being presented unto it’.⁷ In the margin of *A Christian Letter* Hooker penned a quick response:

There are certaine woordes as Nature, Reason, Will and such like which whersoever you find named you suspect them presently as bugs wordes, because what they mean you doe not in deed as you ought apprehend. You have heard that mans Nature is corrupt his reason blind his will perverse. *Whereupon under coulour of condemning corrupt nature you condemn nature* and so in the rest. [my italics]⁸

The response is developed in the *Dublin Fragment* on ‘Grace and Free Will’.⁹ Hooker asks ‘must the will cease to be itselfe because the grace of God helpeth it?’¹⁰ Just as Christ’s assumption of human nature does not destroy

4 *Lawes* 5.53.1

5 *Lawes* 5.53.1

6 *FLE* 4:17

7 *Lawes* 1.7.6

8 *FLE* 4:17

9 *FLE* 4:101-13

10 *FLE* 4:101

the essential properties belonging to that nature, so also grace, when communicated to fallen humanity, does not destroy the ‘naturall powers’ of the human soul. On the contrary, they are regenerated by this communication of grace. Thus, according to Hooker:

Freedom of operation wee have by nature, butt the abilitie of vertuous operation by grace, because through sinne our nature hath taken that disease and weaknes, whereby *of itselſe it inclineth only unto evil*. The naturall powers and faculties therefore of mans minde are through our native corruption soe weakened and of themselves so averse from God, that without the influence of his special grace, they bring forth nothing in his sight acceptable, noe nott the blossoms or least budds *that tende to the fruit of eternal life*.¹¹ [my italics]

The union between fallen humanity and Christ is consequently not a transmigration out of its own nature into the divine substance. According to the Chalcedonian christological paradigm, the human is regenerated and sanctified by the grace of union. The reformation doctrine of the two kinds of righteousness is firmly grounded in this christological model. By the grace of justification, the soul is ‘in Christ’, and shares in his divine perfection; by the grace of sanctification, Christ works ‘in the soul’ and thus the human is brought by degrees to perfection in the life of virtue. Yet the soul and Christ must never be confused with one another in this account of soteriological union. Hooker’s brief rule concerning the questions about the union of natures in Christ thus provides a useful insight into the logic of his doctrine of grace: ‘of both natures there is a *cooperation* often, an *association* always, but never any mutual *participation* whereby the properties of the one are infused into the other’.¹²

The doctrine of salvation poses a problem of mediation fundamentally analogous to that addressed by the Chalcedonian definition. The anthropological starting point for the reformers was the conviction of man’s total corruption and sinfulness, which was the consequence of the Fall. An infinite gulf was seen to divide an utterly depraved, fallen humanity from their infinitely righteous and perfect Creator. The problem of salvation was understood to depend upon the problem of the ontological mediation

¹¹ *FLE* 4:103

¹² *Lawes* 5.53.3; compare *HW* 3:612

between man and God across this gulf. Hooker's account of this gulf in terms of the soul's total depravity is unmistakably reformed:

And sinne hath twoe measures whereby the greatnes therof is judged. The object, God against whome: and the subject, that creature in whome sinne is. By the one measure all sinne is infinit, because he is Infinite whome sinne offendeth: for which cause there is one eternall punishment due in justice unto all sinners... He leaveth us not as Adam in the hands of our own wills att once indued with abilitie to stand of our owne accord ... *because that abilitie is altogether lost.*¹³ [my italics]

Hooker's conviction of the soul's complete unworthiness is wholly consistent with the usual reformed view. The problem of mediation is crucial. Conversely the soul's fulfilment, happiness, and perfection is also, according to Hooker, infinite: 'No good is infinite but only God: therefore he is our felicitie and blisse.'¹⁴ Salvation is nothing less than the bridging of the gulf between man's infinite wickedness and God's infinite goodness: 'Then are we happie therefore when fully we enjoy God, as an object wherein the powers of our soules are satisfied even with everlasting delight: so that although we be men, yet by being unto God united we live as it were the life of God.'¹⁵

How is this complete union of man with God accomplished? How do men come to 'the participation of the divine nature'?¹⁶ What constitutes the bridge and *how* is this mediation accomplished? Hooker's treatment of this problem of soteriological mediation is radically christocentric, and in this respect he is a close follower of the theological approach adopted by Calvin. The soul's 'participation of the divine nature', according to Calvin, was objectively achieved in and through Christ's assumption of human nature in the Incarnation.¹⁷ The mediation between man and God was possible solely by the God-man Christ.¹⁸

13 *FLE* 4:140, 141

14 *Laws* 1.11.2

15 *Laws* 1.11.2

16 *Laws* 5.56.7

17 *Inst* 2.12.1

18 *Wendel Calvin: The Origins and Development of his Religious Thought* Philip Mairet trans (London 1963) pp 215-32; *Inst* 2.12.1. Hooker, like Calvin, placed considerable emphasis on traditional christological doctrine as defined by the four Ecumenical Councils of the ancient church. Both divines, as we shall show later, drew upon the dialectical formula of orthodox Christology to clarify matters of ecclesiology and political theory as well as soteriology.

For Hooker and Calvin both, the soul's participation in the divine nature was attained 'by Christ alone'.¹⁹ In *A Learned Discourse of Justification*, Hooker argues forcibly for the doctrine of salvation by Christ alone.²⁰ In that sermon, he is intent on a demonstration of 'how the foundation of faith is overthrown'²¹ by the requirement of virtuous works to the attainment of justifying righteousness: 'Salvation only by Christ [*solus Christus*] is the true foundation upon which Christianity standeth.'²² This union of the soul with Christ is described as a 'mysticall conjunction':

Wee are therefore in God through Christ eternallie accordinge to that intent and purpose whereby wee were chosen to be made his in this present world before the world it selfe was made...Wee are in Christ because he knoweth and loveth us even as partes of him selfe. No man actuallie is in him but they in whome he actuallie is. For he which hath not the Sonne of God hath not life.²³

Our union with Christ, according to Hooker, is the wholly indispensable condition for our salvation. This immediate and 'actuall incorporation', *insitio in Christum*, is the foundational principle of orthodox reformed soteriology.

The problem of the specifically soteriological mediation has only begun to emerge at this stage of the *Discourse*. As Hooker observed in his tractate on 'Grace and Free Will' in the *Dublin Fragments*: 'In Grace there is nothing of soe great difficultie as to define after what manner and measure it worketh.'²⁴ The union may be viewed in two ways: 'Participation is that mutuall inward hold which Christ hath of us and wee of him, in such sort that ech possesseth other by waie of speciall interest propertie and inherent copulation.'²⁵ The union of fallen humanity with Christ is viewed dialectically by Hooker in accord with the Chalcedonian christological paradigm. On the one hand, there is union with Christ by virtue of God's eternal decree. The soul is 'in God through Christ eternallie accordinge to

19 HW 3:530

20 *A Learned Discourse of Justification, Workes, and how the Foundation of Faith is overthrowne* HW 3:483-547. The discourse is a set of sermons on Habakkuk 1:4.

21 HW 3:483

22 HW 3:528

23 *Lawes* 5.56.7

24 *FLE* 4:111

25 *Lawes* 5.56.1

that intent and purpose whereby we were chosen to be made his in this present world before the world it selfe was made'.²⁶ On the other hand, 'our beinge in Christ by eternall foreknowledge saveth us not without our actuall and reall adoption into the fellowship of his Sainctes in this present world'.²⁷ Hooker has here distinguished a twofold participation of grace. First, humanity is united to God through Christ beyond time: 'God therefore lovinge eternallie his Sonne, he must needes eternallie in him have loved and preferred before all others them which are spirituallie sithence descended and spronge out of him.'²⁸ Yet, 'no man actuallie is in him but they in whome he actuallie is'. As Fr Kennedy has pointed out, Christ dwells in us and we in him. Thus Hooker emphasizes the simultaneous union both in heaven beyond the limits of time (*coram Deo*) as well as here and now (*coram hominibus*). Thus, this initial analysis of the 'mutuall participation' between Christ and humanity reveals a tension between the realms of time and eternity which is characteristic of Hooker's soteriology.

This tension of realms is built up further in Hooker's analysis of the so-called *ordo salutis*, the order of salvation. The communication of grace to men is marked by important distinctions. Salvation is achieved in and through the unity of Christ's person, yet this unity is participated in by the soul in clearly distinct modes:

But we say, our salvation is by Christ alone; therefore howsoever, or whatsoever, we add unto Christ in the matter of salvation, we overthrow Christ. Our case were very hard, if this argument, so universally meant as it is proposed, were sound and good. We ourselves do not teach Christ alone, excluding our own faith, unto justification; Christ alone, excluding our own works, unto sanctification; Christ alone, excluding the one or the other as unnecessary unto salvation.²⁹

The problem of soteriology for Hooker, as indeed for Reformation theology generally, was *how* salvation can be wrought by Christ alone and yet not result in paralysing men into total inaction. Hooker follows Calvin closely in

²⁶ *Lawes* 5.56.7; compare Calvin *Inst* 3.25.5: 'Of those whom God has chosen as his children it is not said that he elected them in themselves, but in his Christ...' quoted by Wendel p 275.

²⁷ *Lawes* 5.56.7

²⁸ *Lawes* 5.56.6

²⁹ *HW* 3:530

his treatment of these distinct ‘modes’ of grace.³⁰ Hooker and Calvin, both of them following Luther’s lead, distinguish between the grace of justification and the grace of sanctification: ‘There are two kinds of Christian righteousness: the one without us, which we have by imputation; the other in us, which consisteth of faith, hope, and charity, and other Christian virtues... God giveth us both the one justice and the other: the one by accepting us for righteous in Christ; the other by working Christian righteousness in us.’³¹ These two modes of participation in Christ derive from one and the same source. Both are means whereby Christ alone works the salvation of humanity. The two modes of righteousness are distinct, yet always together. According to Calvin ‘justifying Grace is not separate from regeneration although these are distinct things’.³² In Hooker’s formulation ‘wee participate Christ partelie by imputation, as when those things which he did and suffered for us are imputed unto us for righteousness; partlie by habituall and reall infusion, as when grace is inwardlie bestowed while we are on earth...’³³ These two modes of grace, ie imputed or justifying grace, and infused or sanctifying grace, must not be mixed or confused lest the ‘foundation of faith be overthrown’.³⁴ On the model of the Chalcedonian paradigm the affirmation of a ‘righteousness of works’ does not contradict the doctrine of justification by faith alone.

Justifying righteousness is the logically prior mode of grace. Calvin defined it as the ‘principle of the whole doctrine of salvation and the foundation of all religion’.³⁵ It is a ‘perfect’ righteousness. It is perfect because it is the righteousness of Christ himself. It is, however, extraneous or ‘alien’ to the soul, and by no means can it be regarded as a spiritual quality or ‘habit’. Aquinas regarded *gratia justificans* as a *qualitas quaedam supernaturalis* which operates as the root and principle of good works.³⁶ Hooker distinguishes his interpretation from the Thomist soteriology as enshrined in the decrees of the Council of Trent, on the grounds that the latter tends to a confusion of the two principal modes of grace:

30 Compare *HW* 3:485 and *Inst* 3.16.1

31 *HW* 3:507

32 *Inst* 4.11.11

33 *Lawes* 5.56.11

34 *HW* 3:509

35 Sermon on Luke 1:5-10 in *Opera omnia quae supersunt in Corpus Reformatorum*, (Brunswick 1863-1900) vol 46, 23, quoted by Wendel Calvin p 256.

36 Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologica* Ia IIae qu 100 (Antwerp 1612) vol xi 253ff, quoted by Hooker in *HW* 3:487

This grace [ie justification] they will have to be applied by infusion; to the end, that as the body is warm by the heat which is in the body, so the soul might be righteous by the inherent grace: which grace they make capable of increase; as the body may be more and more warm, so the soul more and more justified, according as grace shall be augmented; the augmentation whereof is merited by good works, as good works are made meritorious by it.³⁷

Over against the view that justifying grace is itself infused as a habit of the soul, and is therefore both inherent in the soul and dynamic in its operation, Hooker upholds the standard interpretation of the reformers. On account of man's total depravity, there is no capability whatever on the part of the soul to receive the righteousness of justification as a quality or *habitus*:

The righteousness wherein we must be found, if we will be justified, is not our own; therefore we cannot be justified by any inherent quality. Christ hath merited righteousness for as many as are found in him. In him God findeth us, if we be faithful; for by faith we are incorporated into him.³⁸

For Hooker, as for Calvin, Luther, and the magisterial reformers generally, the principal controversy between the Church of Rome and her Protestant critics, hangs upon this soteriological application of the Chalcedonian definition. For the reformers, the righteousness whereby the soul is justified 'before God' is perfect, alien, and wholly passive. It is 'perfect' because it is the righteousness of Christ himself: 'Such we are in the sight of God the Father, as is the very Son of God himself.'³⁹ The righteousness of justification is altogether incapable of increase or decrease. It is 'alien' since it does not 'inhere' in the sinful soul, but is 'imputed' to it as though it were perfectly righteous. It is 'passive' insofar as men participate in it entirely by faith. At one point Hooker refers to justification as 'the external justice of Christ Jesus' as opposed to 'habitual justice'.⁴⁰ The extraneous character of this mode of grace is of considerable significance. In the imputed righteousness of Christ, the soul finds its unity and stability altogether outside itself, 'in

37 HW 3:487, 488

38 HW 3:40

39 HW 3:490

40 HW 3:508

heaven' with Christ.⁴¹ This is the so-called 'realm of faith' which, for reformed soteriology, must be kept 'wholly distinct from the secondary or consequent 'realm of activity'. To confuse the two realms or the two modes of grace is to overthrow the foundation of faith.⁴²

Sanctifying righteousness, on the other hand, is defined, according to the accepted formula of Protestant orthodoxy, as 'inherent, but not perfect'.⁴³ Hooker distinguishes it 'as a thing *in nature* different from the righteousness of justification'.⁴⁴ It is by its nature imperfect, habitual, and infused as against the perfect, alien, and imputed character of the first mode. The grace of sanctification, or regeneration as it is sometimes called, is 'Christ in us' as against the mode of 'ourselves in Christ'.⁴⁵ This second mode of grace is 'inherent' in that it is a gift of virtues, that is, 'habits' of the soul which contribute to a progressive, incremental regeneration of the will: 'the effects thereof are such actions as the Apostle doth call the fruits, the works, the operations of the Spirit'.⁴⁶ Thus while the Christian is totally justified by the imputation to him of Christ's perfect righteousness, at the same time he remains a sinner throughout his life – *simul justus et peccator*. The sinner, having been justified by faith, is nevertheless engaged in a dynamic process of becoming righteous. For Hooker the difficulty in the teaching of Trent was therefore 'not that she requireth works at their hands that will be saved: but that she attributeth unto works a power of satisfying God for sin; and a virtue to merit both grace here and in heaven glory'.⁴⁷ According to the Chalcedonian paradigm, the soul's complete participation in the divine nature must not be confused with the continuing integrity of its own finite human nature.

Here we have the central dialectical feature of reformed soteriology. On the one hand, the Christian is *totally* righteous and, on the other, is *becoming* righteous by degrees. The soul exists simultaneously in two completely distinct worlds. No longer can justification be viewed as a progressive, incremental ascent from the imperfect realm of nature to the perfect realm of

41 HW 3:490

42 HW 3:491, 509

43 HW 3:485

44 HW 3:491

45 *Lawes* 5.56.11

46 HW 3:491, 92

47 HW 3:531,32

grace. The soul is rather present in both realms *at once*. By faith the believer is already in the 'eschatological' realm of perfect righteousness, yet continues to exist in a 'temporal' realm of dynamic righteousness. The Christian, by virtue of his simultaneous participation in these two modes of grace, participates in the two realms of incorruption and corruption, perfect justice and imperfect justice, imputed and infused grace. Following Chalcedonian logic, nothing can be more important than keeping these two modes distinct from each other, especially on account of their close association in the Christian 'person': 'The want of exact distinguishing between these two ways, and observing what they have in common, what peculiar, hath been the cause of the greatest part of that confusion whereof Christianity at this day laboureth.'⁴⁸ The two realms of passive and active righteousness are thus sharply distinguished, yet continue unified and indeed finally inseparable. They are united in that 'Christ, without any other associate, finished all the parts of our redemption, and purchased salvation himself alone'.⁴⁹ They are distinct in the modes of their 'conveyance': 'in the world to be called, justified, and sanctified: after we have left the world to be received into glory; Christ in every of these hath somewhat which he worketh alone.'⁵⁰ Thus the logic of Hooker's soteriology is closely analogous to his discussion of the principles of Christology. As was the case with Calvin, the doctrine of the union and distinction of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ, the doctrine of the so-called 'hypostatic union', provides a useful logical paradigm for the clarification of soteriological issues.⁵¹ Grace does not destroy nature; but in perfecting nature and in its use of nature, grace must not be confused with nature.

Christology and the Doctrine of the Church

The logic of the Chalcedonian definition which governs the distinction and relation between the two realms along with their respective kinds of power, the 'two regiments', is extended even further by the reformers in their treatment of questions in the sphere of ecclesiology and political order. There was nothing particularly novel or original in this close association of the doctrine of power with the basic principles of the doctrine of grace and

48 *HW* 3:601

49 *HW* 3:531

50 *HW* 3:531

51 See Wendel on Calvin's employment of christological arguments in his refutation of the mystical speculations of Andreas Osiander: *Calvin* pp 235ff

through soteriology back to Christology. On the contrary, the close link between Christology and ecclesiology was a commonplace of Reformation thought.⁵²

It has been said that the section of the *Lawes* dealing with Christology 'is like a central tower' round which the whole argument of the treatise is constructed.⁵³ It is instructive to examine Hooker's doctrine of the church through the categories of Chalcedonian Christology.⁵⁴ The church is, in its most fundamental nature, the 'body of Christ', who is its divine head. The body, like the head, has two natures – one divine, the other human. While the church is twofold, it is not two churches, just as Christ, who is both divine and human, is neither two Christs, nor two persons. According to the Chalcedonian definition Christ is 'truly' God, 'perfectly' human, 'indivisibly' one individual 'person', and finally, his two 'natures' remain altogether distinct within his indivisible 'person'.⁵⁵ As we have seen, the great christological heresies of the early church involved denial of one or other of these principles. Thus the Arians denied Christ's deity; the Apollinarians denied his full humanity; the Nestorians asserted that Christ was two

52 See P D L Avis *The Doctrine of the Church in the Theology of the Reformers* (London 1981) 1 pp 36-44; F Edward Cranz provides a clear and detailed exposition of the derivation of Luther's ecclesiology and political theory from his doctrine of justification in *An Essay on the Development of Luther's Thought on Justice, Law, and Society* (Cambridge, Mass 1959) pp 13 ff. I am indebted particularly to Cranz's researches for my understanding of the basic logic of Luther's position.

53 Lionel Thornton *Richard Hooker: A Study of his Theology* (London 1924) p 54. The centrality of Chalcedonian orthodoxy in Hooker's thought has been remarked by George W Morrel in his article 'Richard Hooker, Theologian of the English Reformation', *Christianity Today* 10 (September 1966) pp 8-10.

54 It was, of course, commonplace to supply the analogy of Christology to the interpretation of the Sacraments. For instance, see Calvin's condemnation of the Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation as a manifestation of Eutychianism, viz a failure to distinguish between Christ's human and divine natures, 'and insisting only on the unity of person, he converted God into man and man into God. What madness, then, is it to confound heaven with earth, sooner than not withdraw the body of Christ from its heavenly sanctuary' *Inst* 4.17.30. Luther employs a christological paradigm to explain the relation of Faith and Law in his *Commentary on Galatians* (1531), WA XL,1,427,1: *Ut si dico de Christo homine, tamen duae naturae distinctae: ...Dico: humanitas non est divinitas et tamen homo est Deus. Sic lex non est fides. In concreto et composito kommen sie zusammen.* For a discussion of Luther's use of the christological paradigm, see F E Cranz, 63,93; for Calvin's Christocentrism see Wendel *passim*, esp 311. See also E D Willis Calvin's *Catholic Christology* (Leiden 1966) pp 18-74.

55 *Lawes* 5.54.10

persons; and the Eutychians confused the two natures in their affirmation of the unity of his person.⁵⁶ Hooker firmly upholds the Chalcedonian condemnation of these christological heresies.⁵⁷ He extends the Chalcedonian paradigm to his understanding of the relation between the ‘mysticall’ and ‘politique’ bodies of the church. The church, like Christ her head, is an invisible, supernatural, divine community. As the mystical communion of saints, the totality of the elect ‘foreknown and chosen before all worlds’, it is altogether hidden. Like God and Christ, the church mystical is an ‘object of faith’.⁵⁸ Its essential divinity consists in being known only to God. In this divine aspect, the church is subject solely to the operation of supernatural law and is apprehensible to the eye of faith alone.⁵⁹

On the other hand, the church, like Christ, has become incarnate. In this other aspect, the church is a visible, human and political association. The external body of believers, like Christ the Son of Man, is not hidden, but manifest. As distinct from Christ’s body as God sees it, the Church is defined as it appears to us. The church in this external aspect is not ordered by the rule of the gospel, but rather by positive human laws deduced from the law of nature. Just as God chooses to reveal himself in human form, so also the church is manifest as a human institution. Hooker formulates this concept succinctly: ‘Grace hath use of nature.’⁶⁰

There are thus two natures ascribed to the church analogous to the two natures of Christ. Discourse concerning the church, just as in the doctrine of Christology, must observe certain rules as to the manner of the relation between the ‘mysticall’ and ‘politique’ bodies, that is to say, how they are connected and how distinguished. Just as in the discourse concerning the manner of the relation between the divine and human natures in the person of Christ there was considerable room for confusion and disagreement, so also in the doctrine of the church. As Hooker observes at the outset of his christological inquiry: ‘there is no union of God with man without that meane betwene both which is both’.⁶¹ Similarly in relation to the doctrine of the church, there is no participation by men in the divine nature without

56 See note 2 above for a summary of Chalcedonian doctrine. See also *Lawes* 5.42.13.

57 Compare Calvin *Institutes* 2.14.1-8

58 Calvin *Inst* 4.1.4.

59 *Lawes* 1.15.1

60 *Lawes* 3.8.6

61 *Lawes* 5.50.3

membership in Christ, and hence participation in his body the church. This body may be viewed in two fashions: first, as it is in Christ and known in God, ie mystically; and secondly, as it is discerned externally in the world, and known to men, ie institutionally. The complexity of Hooker's ecclesiology unfolds when the nature of the connections between these two aspects of the church is discussed. In its logical complexity the problem of ecclesiology mirrors Hooker's christological discourse.

First we must examine the character of the union between the two natures of the church in order to see clearly how an association which is on the one hand invisible, supernatural, mystical, in short divine, and on the other hand visible, natural, secular, or human, can be simultaneously, and thus indivisibly, one church. Secondly, we must consider the manner in which these distinctions are preserved within a primary unity. Just as Christ is a single, undivided person while being both God and man, so also his body the church is fundamentally one church existing in two realms: 'Our being in Christ by eternall foreknowledge saveth us not without our actuall and reall adoption into the fellowship of his saintes in this present world.'⁶² In this Hooker merely follows the standard formulations of reformed ecclesiological orthodoxy. Christians must have recourse to 'visible means of grace' as the Scripture reveals.⁶³ Thus when it is Calvin's intention to speak of the *visible Church*, 'let us learn if only from her title of mother', he says, 'how much the knowledge of this same is useful, and indeed necessary ... outside the bosom of the Church we can hope for no remission of sins nor any salvation'.⁶⁴ Hooker's discussion of the 'visible means of grace' rests upon the 'necessitie of Sacraments unto the participation of Christ'.⁶⁵ Thus membership in the 'mysticall bodie' of the church is tied by personal union to participation in the external, visible institution of the church. In parallel fashion, the Godhead is revealed to man through the mediation of Christ's assumption of the human nature. There is thus, by analogy, an *ecclesiological* 'communication of idioms' between the mystical and institutional churches, just as in Christology between the human and divine natures:⁶⁶

62 *Lawes* 5.56.7

63 *Lawes* 5.56.7

64 Calvin *Inst* 4.1.4; compare *Lawes* 5.50.1 65 *Lawes* 5.57.1

66 *Lawes* 5.53-4

A kinde of mutuall commutation there is whereby those concrete names *God* and *Man* when wee speake of Christ doe take interchangable one an others roome, so that *for truth of speech* it skilleth not whether wee saie that the Sonne of God hath created the world and the Sonne of man by his death hath saved it, or els that the Sonne of man did create and the Sonne of God die to save the world. Howbeit as oft as wee attribute to God what the manhood of Christ claymeth, or to man what his deitie hath right unto, wee understand by the name of God and the name of man neither the one nor the other nature, but *the whole person of Christ* in whome both natures are. [my emphasis]

In the christological controversies of the early church, Hooker observes that stress upon the union of the two natures led in time to their confusion or conflation: ‘So Eutyches of sound beliefe as touchinge their true *personall* copulation became unsound by denyng the difference which still continueth betwene the one and the other nature.’⁶⁷ It was thus paramount to orthodox Christology to ‘keepe warilie a middle corse shunninge both the distraction of persons wherein Nestorius went awrie, and also this later confusion of natures which deceived Eutyches’.⁶⁸ By analogy in the doctrine of the church, the mystical and external aspects of the church’s life must be kept distinct so ‘that there groweth neither gaine nor losse of essentiall properties to either’;⁶⁹ yet they are not separate for all that. While membership in the mystical body is attainable only *through* the visible means, it is essential to the preservation of fundamental doctrinal orthodoxy that there be no confusion or mixture of the sign with the signified, of the finite with the infinite, of the human with the divine:

The sequell of which conjunction of natures in the person of Christ is no abolishment of naturall properties apperteing to either substance, no transition or transmigation thereof out of one substance into an other, finallie no such mutuall infusion as reallie causeth the same naturall operations or properties to be made common unto both substances...⁷⁰

67 *Lawes* 5.52.4

68 *Lawes* 5.52.4; See also Calvin *Inst* 4.17.30; 2.14 *passim*. E D Willis, in his book *Calvin’s Catholic Christology* (Leiden 1966), argues that Calvin was intentionally unoriginal in his Christology, p 63, and that his aim was to be faithful above all to the orthodoxy of the christological definitions of the Council of Chalcedon, p 66.

69 *Lawes* 5.53.1

70 *Lawes* 5.53.1

The ‘naturall operations and properties’ which belong to the mystical or spiritual nature of the Church must not be ‘infused’ into the life of the external, political community of the Church.

Finally, there is a communion of idioms between the two natures of the Church whereby the human positive laws governing the external polity have the force of divine ordinance:

So that lawes humane must be made according to the generall lawes of nature, and without contradiction unto any positive law in scripture. Otherwise they are ill made. Unto lawes thus made and received by a whole Church, they which live within the bosome of that Church, must not thinke it a matter indifferent either to yeeld or not to yeeld obedience... It doth not stand with the duty which we owe to our heavenly father, that to ordinances of our mother the Church we should shew ourselves disobedient. Let us not say we keepe the commandements of the one, when we breake the law of the other: *For unlesse we observe both, we obey neither.*⁷¹

Thus for Hooker there is therefore an explicitly divine basis for the human, positive laws and external institutions of the church. These laws are *by nature* wholly distinct from the divine, revealed law, but are nonetheless divine in a mediated fashion according to the Chalcedonian paradigm: ‘Yea that which is more, the lawes thus made God himselfe doth in such sort authorize, that to despise them is to despise in them him.’⁷² The proper distinction of the two aspects of the church is not such as to enforce a complete and unbridgeable separation of the external-human authority from the mystical-divine authority. Rather, by the ‘grace of union’, the distinction is preserved while, at the same time, divine authority is mediated *through* human means. As in the case of Hooker’s Christology, as regards the union of the two natures in Christ, ‘of both natures there is a *cooperation* often, an *association* alwayes, but never any mutuall *participation* whereby the properties of the one are infused into the other’.⁷³ That is to say, Christ is both God and man without the confusion of Godhead with humanity. Thus also, the church is a ‘mysticall’ and ‘politique’ body without the confusion of

71 *Lawes* 3.9.3

72 *Lawes* 3.9.3

73 *Lawes* 5.53.3

the former with the latter. The authority exercised by Christ in the 'body mysticall' is unmediated; the authority he exerts over the 'body politique' is mediated by external and visible representatives. Out of these considerations perhaps we can begin to see how the reformers' strict adherence to Chalcedonian christological orthodoxy shapes in a fundamental way their treatment of both the doctrine of salvation and the doctrine of the church.

This paper was read at the Atlantic Theological Conference held in Fredericton, New Brunswick, in June 1997.

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