

“Betwene the throne of God in heaven and his
Church upon earth here militant”:
Instruction and Prayer in the Fifth Book
of Hooker’s *Lawes*

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Betwene the throne of God in heaven and his Church upon earth here militant if it be so that Angels have their continuall intercourse, where should we finde the same more verified then in these two ghostlie exercises, the one ‘Doctrine,’ the other ‘Prayer’? For what is thassemblie of the Church to learne, but the receivinge of Angels descended from above? What to pray, but the sendinge of Angels upward? His heavenly inspirations and our holie desires are as so many Angels of entercourse and comerce betwene God and us. As teaching bringeth us to know that God is our supreme truth; so prayer testifieth that we acknowledg him our soveraigne good.¹

Early on in the course of his elaborate explication and apology on behalf of the *Book of Common Prayer* (1559) in the fifth book of his treatise *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie* (1597), Richard Hooker defines prayer in intimate association with doctrine, that is to say with formal instruction in the principles of the Christian religion. The liturgy of the Church is for Hooker nothing less than an outward, visible representation of a two-fold motion of procession and return, that is to say of a dynamic process of messages of instruction communicated from above to worshippers below, with a congruent and corresponding offering heavenward of praise and supplication from those to whom these “ghostlie” messages have been communicated. Moreover, he very strikingly identifies this participation in the church’s formal act of prayer with the activity of the angels: “What is thassemblie of the Church to learne, but the receivinge of Angels descended from above? What to pray, but the sendinge of Angels upward?” By linking this vivid image of angelic intercourse between God and humanity with instruction in the “supreme

1. *Lawes*, V.23.1; *FLE* 2:110.7–16. All references to *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie* cite the standard *Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker*, gen. ed. W. Speed Hill (London and Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1977–97). Citations are abbreviated hereafter as *Lawes* with references to book, chapter, and section numbers followed by volume, page, and line numbers in the Folger edition (*FLE*).

truth” and with testimony of the “soveraigne good,” Hooker embraces an ancient tradition which identifies the forms of the Beautiful, the True, and the Good in unity of substance. For Hooker, the goal of full actualisation of human nature is to be achieved by no other means than through a full participation of the divine nature—as he himself puts it, “then are we happy therefore, when fully we enjoy God, as an object wherein the powers of our soules are satisfied euen with euclasting delight: so that although we be men, yet by being vnto God vnited, we liue as it were the life of God.”² Such a perfect enjoyment to be achieved in possession of the Good requires knowledge of the things that are most true.

The mediation of divine inspiration and human longing, of thought and desire, is achieved, at least in similitude, by means of an angelic motion. Hooker is careful in this passage to identify the angelic linkage between heaven and earth, as between the forms of Truth and the Good, in the language of “figure”: these “heavenly inspirations and our holic desires are *as* so many Angels of entercourse and comerce betwene God and us.” This account of the unification of doctrine and prayer in the liturgy as a dynamic ‘double’ motion linking together the divine and the human depends upon an explication of the theological significance of the mutual indwelling of God and man; and consequently Hooker’s exposition of the true nature of liturgy is Christological in substance. In order, therefore, to understand the interconnectedness of doctrine, prayer, and worship, it is necessary in Hooker’s estimation to interpret the Incarnation.

For as our naturall life consisteth in the union of the bodie with the soule; so our life supernaturall in the union of the soule with God. And for as much as there is no union of God with man without that meane betwene both which is both, it seemeth requisite that wee first consider how God is in Christ, then how Christ is in us. and [only then] how the sacramentes doe serve to makes us pertakers of Christ.³

The purpose of our discussion is to explore Richard Hooker’s conception of human participation of the divine life⁴—*theosis*, so to speak, although Hooker does not employ this exact term—through fulfillment of a dynamic, dialectical interaction of prayer and instruction in the act of worship. To

2. *Laws*, I.11.2; *FLE* 1:112.17–20.

3. *Laws*, V.50.3; *FLE* 2:208.20–209.2.

4. See Charles Irish, “Participation of God Himself: law, the mediation of Christ, and sacramental participation in the thought of Richard Hooker,” in *Richard Hooker and the English Reformation, Studies in Early Modern Religious Reforms*, ed. W.J. Torrance Kirby, vol. 2 (Dordrecht and London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), 165–84; Edmund Newey, “The Form of Reason: Participation in the Work of Richard Hooker, Benjamin Whichcote, Ralph Cudworth and Jeremy Taylor,” *Modern Theology* 18.1 (2002): 1–26.

this end we propose to examine in turn his account of the twin “ghostlie exercises” of prayer as a framing of the human desire for happiness in the possession of the good, of instruction as initiation into the mysteries of a true knowledge of first principles, and of liturgy as the beautiful means of their unification in knowledge and action.

OF PRAYER AND THE GOOD

Hooker's dialectical treatment of preaching and prayer as the ascent and descent of the angels in “commerce betwene God and us” constitutes a bridge between a section in the fifth book of the *Lawes* touching on divine instruction and a further series of chapters on Common Prayer and the liturgy of the Offices. For Hooker, the weaving together of instruction with praise and supplication in the offices of Morning and Evening Prayer constitutes a prototype of our participation in the double angelic motion. In keeping with his capacious metaphor of instruction as an angelic communication of heavenly inspiration, Hooker's account of “publique teaching or preaching” is broad indeed in scope. Understood in the widest sense, public teaching is the “open publication of *heavenlie mysteries* ... Cateschising maie be in schooles, it maie be in private families. But when we make it a kinde of preachinge we meane alwaies the publique performance thereof in the open hearinge of men, because thinges are preacht not in that they are taught but in that they are publisht.”⁵ The public reading of the Scriptures and catechism as well as the preaching of sermons constitute the ordinary public means of transmission of heavenly messages “sent from above.”⁶

For with us the readinge of scripture in the Church is a parte of our Church litourgie, a speciall portion of the service which we doe to God, and not an exercise to spend the time, when one doth waite for an others comminge, till thassemblee of them that shall afterwarde worship him be complete ... Sermons are not the onlie preaching which doth save soules ... our usuall publique reading of the worde of God for the peoples instruction is preaching. The worde of God outwardlie administred (his spirit inwardlie concurring therewith) converteth, edifieth, and saveth soules.⁷

It is important to note that prayer is referred to by Hooker equivocally. In a more restricted sense prayer is just one of the two angelic motions, as in his figurative declaration concerning the “sacrifice of praise” that “prayers are those caulves of mens lippes; those most gracious and sweet odors; those rich presentes and guiftes which beinge carryed up into heaven doe best testifie our dutifull affection, and are for the purchasing of all favour at the

5. *Lawes*, V.18.1; 2:65.18; 2:67.6–10.

6. *Lawes*, V.18–21; 2:65.4–87.17.

7. *Lawes*, V.19.1; 2:21.4.

handes of God the most undoubted means we can use.”⁸ When he turns to consider more generally the form of Common Prayer, however, Hooker takes prayer as representing the liturgy and therefore comprising both the upward and downward motions of the “angellic entercorse,” that is to say both instruction in the truth and the orientation of the soul’s desire towards the good as understood.

Moreover, prayer for Hooker is an activity shared by the Church militant and the Church triumphant. Not only do angels provide a fitting metaphor for thinking about the activity of prayer, they are also actual partners in the exercise; since prayer is “a worke *common* unto men with angels, what should we thinke but that so much of our lives is coelestiall and divine as we spend in the exercise of prayer?”⁹ In one sense, the commonness of ‘Common Prayer’ is the participation in an action which transcends any ordinary distinction between an earthly-temporal and a celestial-eternal realm of existence. As members of “that visible mysticall bodie which is [Christ’s] Church”¹⁰ participants have a foot in both the natural and the supernatural orders of being.

OF INSTRUCTION AND REVEALED TRUTH

How to think the community the soul has with God in Christ is taken forward by Hooker in three principal stages. To understand how the soul comes to ‘live the life of God’ through a full participation of the divine nature—and thus to understand the final goal of Common Prayer itself—it is necessary, says Hooker, to consider first “how God is in Christ, then how Christ is in us, and [finally] how the sacramentes doe serve to make us partakers of Christ.”¹¹ This is certainly a tall order, but here at least is an attempt at a potted summary of the argument. First, the question of how God is in Christ leads us to consider the common life of the Holy Trinity and the mystery of God’s Incarnation. In an echo of the rehearsal of the Decalogue Hooker begins with God’s indivisible unity: “The Lord our God is but one God.” As Hooker had previously stated at the outset of Book I, “Our God is one, or rather verie *Onenesse*, and meere unitie, having nothing but it selfe in it selfe, and not consisting (as all things do besides God) of many things.”¹² Yet in this indivisible unity “notwithstanding we adore the Father as beinge altogether of him selfe, wee glorifie that consubstantiall worde which is the Sonne, wee blesse and magnifie that coessentiall Spirit eternallie proceedinge from both which is the holie Ghost. Seeing therefore the Father is of none,

8. *Lawes*, V.23.1; 2:26–31.

9. *Lawes*, V.23.1; 2:111.16–18.

10. *Lawes*, V.24.1; 2:111.26–27.

11. *Lawes*, V.50.1; 2:208.25–209.2.

12. *Lawes*, I.2.2; 1:59.20–23.

the Sonne is of the Father, and the Spirite is of both, they are by these their severall properties reallie distinguishable ech from other."¹³ It is precisely here in the distinction of the divine persons that the principle of common life has its fount and origin. Each person has his own subsistence and all share in the one divine substance. While the second person is properly said to become man, because the eternal Logos and the godhead are 'one subject,' it is the whole nature of God, the divine substance which takes human nature upon itself. To deny this would be to "make the Sonne of God incarnate *not* to be verie God." The 'cause sufficient' for this assumption of the human nature by the divine is, as Paul puts it, "that so God might be in Christ reconcilinge to him selfe the world."¹⁴ This union of God and man in Christ is the key to everything Hooker has to say about prayer and the common life.

Hooker proceeds next to consider the second step in his argument, namely how Christ is present 'in us.' We have moved from the supreme *koinonia* of the persons of the Trinity and the *koinonia* of the divine and human natures in Christ to a consideration of *koinonia* which is between Christ and the Church "in this present worlde."¹⁵ The participation of the divine nature which is the supreme goal of prayer is mediated by the "mutuall inward hold which Christ hath of us and wee of him"—which formula rehearses the doctrine expressed in the Prayer of Humble Access in the *Book of Common Prayer* where the worshippers pray before receiving the sacrament that "we may dwell in him and he in us." The prior 'communities,' so to speak, of Trinity and Incarnation provide the ground of our access. Hooker presents this access in terms of a doctrine of causality: "*everie originall cause imparteth it selfe unto those things which come of it, and Whatsoever taketh beinge from anie other the same is after a sorte in that which giveth it beinge.*"¹⁶ That which is the original source of being 'dwells' in that which is derivative of it and, conversely, that which is derivative 'dwells' in its original source.¹⁷ That com-

13. *Lawes*, V.51.1; 2:209.8–15.

14. 2 Cor. 5:19, quoted in *Lawes*, V.51.3; 2:210.26–211.1.

15. *Lawes*, V.56.1; 2:234.27.

16. *Lawes*, V.56.1; 2:208.25–209.2. See also *Lawes*, 1.5.1, 2 and *A Learned Sermon of the Nature of Pride*, *FLE* 5:341.3–9: "Besides god him selfe being the supreme cause which giveth being unto all things that are and every effect so resembling the cause whereof it cometh that such as the one is the other cannot choose but be also, it followeth that either men are not made righteous by him, or if they be then surely god him selfe is much more that which he maketh us, just if a [He] be the authour fountain and cause of our justice."

17. See *Lawes*, V.56.5; 2: 236.26–31, 237.15–25. "All thinges are therefore pertakers of God, they are his ofspringe, his influence is in them, and the personall wisdom of God is for that verie cause said to excell in nimbleness or agilitie, to pearce into all intellectual pure and subtile spirites, to goe through all, and to reach unto everie thinge which is ... All thinges which God in their times and seasons hath brought forth were eternallie and before all times in God as a worke unbegunne is in the artificer which afterward bringeth it unto effect. Therefore whatsoever

munity which is the mutual indwelling of Christ and his Church, therefore, has its archetype, its highest and most perfect reality, in the community of the three divine persons of the Blessed Trinity:

It followeth hereupon that the Sonne of God beinge light of light, must needs be also light in light. The persons of the Godhead, by reason of the unitie of their substance, doe as necessarilie remaine one within an other as they are of necessitie to be distinguished one from an other, because two are the issue of one, and one the offspringe of the other two, onlie of three one not growinge out of any other.¹⁸

Our “participation of the divine nature,” as the Second Epistle of Peter has it, is interpreted by Hooker as a twofold dwelling in God.¹⁹ On the one hand, the Church participates the community of the godhead by virtue of our union with Christ in God’s predestining purpose: “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 God through the knowledge which is had of us and the love which is borne towards us from everlastinge.”²⁰ On the other side, there is no salvation outside the Church militant—*nulla salus extra ecclesiam!*

But in God wee actuallie are no longer then onlie from the time of our actuall adoption into the bodie of his true Church, into the fellowship of his children. For his Church he knoweth and loveth, so that they which are in the Church are thereby known to be in him. *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.* For in him we are by our actuall incorporation in that societie which hath him for their head and doth make together with him one bodie (he and they in that respect havinge one name) for which cause by vertue of this mysticall conjunction wee are of him and in him even as though our verie flesh and bones should be made continuuate with his. Wee are in Christ because he knoweth and loveth us even as partes of himself. 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.²¹

This passage helps to explain Hooker’s earlier somewhat paradoxical reference to the Church as a “visible mystical body” in his discussion of “Publique Prayer” in chapter 24. The Church, consistent with the archetype of the Incarnation itself, is both in heaven and in earth, mystical yet visible. Once

wee doe behold now in this present world, it was inwrapped within the bowells of divine mercie, written in the booke of eternall wisdom, and held in the handes of omnipotent power, the first foundations of the world beinge as yeat unlaide. So that all thinges which God hath made are in that respect the offspringe of god, they are in him as effects in their highest cause, he likewise actuallie is in them, thassistance and influence of his deitie is *theire life.*”

18. *Lawes*, V.56.2; 2:235.3–9.

19. 2 *Pet.* 1:4 “θείας κοινωνοί φύσεως.”

20. *Lawes*, V.56.7; 2:238.18–24.

21. *Lawes*, V.56.7; 2:238.23–239.8 (my italics).

again we recognize the Christological pattern of 'properties communicated' (*communicatio idiomatum*) as in the image of the 'angelic commerce' with which we began in relation to the dynamic double motion of 'Doctrine' and 'Prayer' in the liturgy of the offices. The Church assembles in order to learn by receiving heavenly inspiration as by angels descending from above and also to pray by offering up holy desires by angels ascending in return.

OF BEAUTY, LITURGY AND THE SACRAMENTS

Instruction and prayer whereof wee have hitherto spoken are duties which serve as elementes partes or principles to the rest that followe, in which number the Sacramentes of the Church are cheife. The Church is to us that verie mother of our new birth in whose bowels wee are all bredd, at whose brestes wee receyve nourishment.²²

Let us now turn to a consideration of beauty as the form which binds together the two "ghostly exercises" whereby the soul is led to embrace God as both "supreme truth" and "sovereigne good." In the prolegomenon to the fifth book of the *Laws* where Hooker lays out certain general propositions as a groundwork preliminary to his exposition of the public duties of religion embodied in the liturgy of the *Book of Common Prayer*,²³ he formulates his first axiom governing the ordering of religious rites and ceremonies with the following observation:

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 *things they signifie*. If religion bear the greatest sway in our *hartes*, our outwarde 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 majestie of him whome we worship. Yea, then are the publique duties of religion best ordered, when the militant Church doth resemble by sensible means, as it maie in such cases, that hidden dignitie and glorie wherewith the church triumphant in heaven is bewtifed.²⁴

Signs are to resemble things signified; outward acts to testify to inward dispositions of the heart; human sensible means to show forth hidden divine glory; things visible to correspond to things invisible; the church militant to emulate the church triumphant: such is Hooker's "first proposition"—or

22. *Laws*, V.50.1; 2:207.10–15.

23. See John Booty's "Introduction to Book V," in *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker*, vol. 6(1), gen. ed. W. Speed Hill (London and Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993), 183–231. See also Torrance Kirby, "Angels descending and ascending: Richard Hooker's discourse on the 'double motion' of Common Prayer," in *Richard Hooker and the English Reformation*, ed. Torrance Kirby (London and Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2003), 111–30.

24. *Laws*, V.6.2; 2:33.26–34.6 (emphasis added).

perhaps we might call it a fundamental hermeneutical premise—concerning the judgment of what is convenient and appropriate in what he calls “*the outward public ordering of Church affairs*,” chiefly with regard to the external forms of divine worship.²⁵ This brief summary of what might be described not inappropriately as Hooker’s ‘semiotic postulate’ is heavily laden with ecclesiological, sacramental, and ultimately Christological consequence, not to mention its enormous apologetic significance.

In support of the hermeneutics of “visible solemnities” in the liturgy Hooker invokes patristic authority in the person of none other than Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, the obscure but remarkably influential early-sixth-century Syrian orthodox theologian who aimed at a synthesis of Christian doctrine with the late-Neoplatonic metaphysics of Proclus.²⁶ In his *Ecclesiastical Hierarchies*, Dionysius offers the most succinct summary of the governing principle of Hooker’s liturgical hermeneutics: “*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 way to direct.*”²⁷ This was a widely recognized formulation of the *lex divinitatis*, the so-called law of the ‘great chain,’ influential earlier in the sixteenth century in the theology of John Colet.²⁸ This law constitutes a principle of cosmic mediation of divine power and governance through a series of hierarchically ordered steps and degrees.²⁹ That the lower ‘sensible things’³⁰ serve to mediate knowledge

25. *Lawes*, V.6.1; 2:32.24.

26. See Torrance Kirby, *Richard Hooker, Reformer and Platonist* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 29–44.

27. *Lawes*, IV.1.3; 1:275.21–24.e. Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *De Ecclesiastica Hierarchia* 2.3.2; *Opera* (Paris: Guillaume Morel, 1562), 121; PG 3:397. See the translation of this passage in *Pseudo-Dionysius: the Complete Works* (Classics of Western Spirituality), translated by Colm Luibheid and Paul Rorem (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1987), 205: “Sacred symbols are actually the perceptible tokens of the conceptual things. They show the way to them and lead to them, and the conceptual things are the source and the understanding underlying the perceptible manifestations of hierarchy.”

28. See Daniel T. Lochman, “*Divus Dionysius*: authority, self, and society in John Colet’s reading of the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 68.1 (2007): 1–34. On Hooker’s extensive use of the concept of the ‘*lex divinitatis*,’ see Torrance Kirby, “Grace and Hierarchy,” *Richard Hooker and the English Reformation*, 25–40.

29. For Aquinas’s formulation of the *lex divinitatis* see *Summa Theologiae* IIa IIae q.172 art.2: “As the Apostle says (Rom. 13.1), *Things that are of God are well-ordered*. Now the Divine ordering (*lex divinitatis*) according to Dionysius (*Eccl. Hier.* V) is such that the lowest things are directed by middle things. Now angels hold a middle position between God and men, in that they have a greater share in the perfection of the Divine goodness than men have. Wherefore the divine enlightenments and revelations are conveyed from God to men by the angels.” See also Denys Turner, “How to read pseudo-Denys today?” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 7.4 (2005): 428–40.

30. ‘Sensible things’ and ‘hierarchies’ are both translated ‘*sacramenta*’ in the Latin edition of the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchies*. See Comm. on 1:275.21–24e in *FLE* 6(1) 602.

of things 'spiritually understood' of which they are resemblances is as clear a formulation as one might wish of the first axiom concerning the "publique duties of religion." Thus, to return to the original axiom concerning the mediatorial function of beauty, "duties of religion performed by whole societies of men, ought to have in them ... a *sensible excellencie*, correspondent to the majestie of him whome we worship ... [they are] best ordered, when the militant Church doth resemble by *sensible means* ... that hidden dignitie and glorie wherewith the church triumphant in heaven is bewtified."³¹ That there can be an aesthetic correspondence between the visible beauty of the church militant in earth and the invisible glory of the church triumphant in heaven is the premise underlying Hooker's appeal to the logic of hierarchical mediation—the *lex divinitatis*.

Throughout the *Lawes* Hooker continually employs arguments and images which support the view that the church, her orders of ministry, government, sacraments and ceremonies, and indeed her music are all modelled on an exemplar of a cosmic order epitomized by the hierarchy of the angels. The 'law coelestial' which governs the angelic beings provides a paradigm for order and worship among mortals:

Neither are the Angels themselves, so farre severed from us in their kind and manner of working, but that, betweene the law of their heavenly operations and the actions of men in this our state of mortalitie, such correspondence there is, as maketh it expedient to know in some sort the one, for the others more perfect direction.³²

The orderly obedience of the angels provides "a paterne and a spurre" to weaker human nature, particularly with respect to the "sensible excellencie" of ceremonies of the liturgy: "even about the outward orders of the Church which serve but for comlinessse, some regard is to be had of Angels, who best like us, when wee are most like unto them in all partes of decent demeanor."³³ Thus the clergy clad in 'holy garments' mandated by the Ornaments Rubric are said to resemble "the glorie of the Sainctes in heaven, together with the bewtie wherein Angels have appeared unto men."³⁴ This concept of the linking together of human worship with angelic models is beautifully summarised in the Collect appointed for the feast of Saint Michael and All Angels: "O Everlasting God, who hast ordered and constituted the services of Angels and men in a wonderful order: Mercifully grant that, as thy holy Angels alway do thee service in heaven, so by thy appointment they may succour and defend us on earth ..."³⁵ Thus for Hooker,

31. *Lawes*, V.6.2; 2:33.26–34.6 (emphasis added).

32. *Lawes*, I.16.4; 1:137.13–30.

33. *Lawes*, I.16.4; 1:137.28–30.

34. *Lawes*, V.29.5; 2:127.12–14.

35. The Collect appointed in the *Book of Common Prayer* to be read on 29 September.

the howse of prayer is a court bewtifed with the presence of the cœlestial powers, that there we stand, we pray, we sound forth hymnes unto God, havinge his Angels intermingled as our associates; and that with reference thereunto thapostle doth require so great care to be had of decencie for the angels sake; how can we come to the house of prayer and not be moved with the verie glorie of the place it selfe, so to frame our affections prayinge, as doth best beseme them, whose sutes thalmightie doth there sitt to heare, and his angels attend to furder?³⁶

For Hooker it is above all the Sacraments which “serve to make men partakers of Christ” and therefore fit company of the angels.³⁷ The sacraments are the divinely appointed and necessary means of our participation of God in Christ. As Article XXV puts it, “Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men’s profession, but rather they be certain witnesses and effectual signs of grace, and God’s good word towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him.” Hooker, following the doctrine of the *Articles of Religion*, rejects the Zwinglian option as falling short of the Chalcedonian measure of Christological orthodoxy. Just as he rejects the claim of our being in Christ simply by sharing a common human nature with him as ‘too cold an interpretation’ of the mystery of our coherence with him, so here he also insists that we must become real partakers of his body.

For wee take not baptisme nor the Eucharist for bare resemblances or memorialls of thinges absent, neither for naked signes and testimonies assuringe us of grace received before, but (as they are in deed and in veritie) for meanes effectuall whereby God when wee take the sacramentes delivereth into our handes that grace available unto eternall life, which grace the sacraments represent or signifie.³⁸

Through the instrumentality of the sacraments God accommodates himself to our mortal condition. In them the ascending motion of the angels of our “holie desires” and the descending motion of the angels of “heavenly inspirations” are united; through these sacramental means, as instruments whereby we receive grace, there is effected the real incorporation of believers into the body of Christ. It is crucial to this teaching that unlike ‘Doctrine’ and ‘Prayer’ in the public religious act, Sacraments are delivered into our hands as individuals: “That savinge grace which Christ originallie is or hath for the good of his whole Church, by sacramentes he severallie deriveth into everie member thereof.”³⁹ This is perhaps one important sense in which

36. *Laws*, V.25.2; 2:114.13–21. See Feisal G. Mohamed, “Renaissance Thought on the Celestial Hierarchy: the decline of a tradition?” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 65.4 (2004): 570–72.

37. *Laws*, V.55.1; 2:227.32 and V.56.7; 2:240.11.

38. *Laws*, V.57.5; 2:247.16–21.

39. *Laws*, V.57.5; 2:247.5–8.

Hooker views 'Doctrine' and 'Prayer' as elements or parts which come to completion and fulfilment in the Sacraments. In the sacraments the heavenly gifts are made actual in the lives of concrete individuals and through these "morall instruments" these individuals are conformed to the common life of the "visible mystical bodie." Through the sacraments there is achieved that 'actual incorporation' into the community which has Christ as its head and which is actually one body with him whereby "wee are of him and in him even as though our verie flesh and bones should be made continuat with his."⁴⁰ Furthermore, the actual range or extent of this participation is also of crucial significance. Communion in Christ's body extends to the totality of our humanity, just as in his Incarnation Christ is *teleos anthropos*, completely and perfectly man. From Christ's body "our verie bodies" through the mystical communion receive the "vitall efficacie" which belongs to him owing to his Resurrection: "Our corruptible bodies could never live the life they shall live, were it not that heere they are joyned with his bodie which is incorruptible, and that his is in oures as a cause of immortalitie, a cause by removinge through the death and merit of his owne flesh that which hindered the life of oures. *Christ* is therefore *both as God and as man* that true vine whereof *wee both spirituallie and corporallie* are branches."⁴¹

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we have seen that Richard Hooker's apology of the liturgy of Common Prayer represents a liturgical knitting together of doctrine and prayer, of heavenly inspiration sent down from above and human aspiration rising up from below, of instruction in the truth through the reading and preaching of the revealed scriptures and of the formation of desire in the supplications of the faithful. The double angelic motion of the receipt of messages here below from God the source who is the 'supreme Truth' above, and the sending up of prayers and praises to the same God who as end is our "soveraigne Good" is an orderly and beautiful motion. In a passage from the Apocrypha that Hooker is fond of quoting, "Wisdom reacheth from one end to another mightily, and sweetly doth she order all things."⁴² In the "sensible excellencie" of an orderly and beautiful activity of divine worship, the individual believer is instructed in the saving knowledge of "supreme truth" as its source and directed towards "soveraigne goodness" as its highest end. Through the knitting together of these three forms—the True, the Good, and the Beautiful—in the "ghostlie activitie" of the liturgy, Hooker

40. *Lawes*, V.56.7; 2:239.4–5.

41. *Lawes*, V.56.9; 2:241.5–11.

42. *Wisdom* 8:1—also the Advent antiphon "O Sapientia," retained in the Almanack of the *Book of Common Prayer* (1559)—quoted by Hooker in *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie*, 1.2.3; 1:60.27–61.6.

maintains that the faithful worshipper of God the Holy Trinity may be drawn through imitation of the “angelic commerce” towards participation of the life of the Deity: “Then are we happie therefore, when fully we enjoy God, as an object wherein the powers of our soules are satisfied euen with everlasting delight: so that although we be men, yet by being vnto God united, we live as it were the life of God.”⁴³

ABSTRACT

“Betwene the throne of God in heaven and his Church upon earth here militant if it be so that Angels have theire continuall intercourse, where should we finde the same more verified then in these two ghostlie exercises, the one ‘Doctrine’, the other ‘Prayer’? For what is thassemblie of the Church to learne, but the receivenge of Angels descended from above? What to pray, but the sendinge of Angels upward? His heavenly inspirations and our holie desires are as so many Angels of entercourse and comerce betwene God and us. As teaching bringeth us to know that God is our supreme truth; so prayer testifieth that we acknowledg him our soveraigne good” (*Lawes* V.23.1; *FLE* 2:110.7–16). Thus Richard Hooker defines prayer in the course of his explanation of the liturgy of the *Book of Common Prayer* (1559) in the fifth book of his treatise *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie* (1597). For Hooker, the full actualisation of the human is to be achieved through a full participation of the divine nature—or as he himself puts it “then are we happie therefore, when fully we enjoy God, as an obiect wherein the powers of our soules are satisfied euen with cuerlasting delight: so that although we be men, yet by being vnto God vnited, we liue as it were the life of God” (*Lawes*, I.11.2; *FLE* 1:112.17–20). Prayer is a dynamic ‘double’ motion which links the divine and the human together dialectically and whose goal is the mutual indwelling of God and man. To give a full account of this goal it is necessary to understand “how God is in Christ, then how Christ is in us, and [finally] how the sacramentes doe serve to makes us pertakers of Christ.” The ultimate aims of prayer and theological reason are on this view one and the same. The purpose of this proposed paper is to explore Richard Hooker’s conception of *theosis* as a dynamic interaction of prayer and Christian teaching.

43. *Lawes*, I.11.2; 1:112.17–20.