



Richard Hooker and the Sufficiency of Scripture

Mark LeTourneau¹
mletourneau@weber.edu

ABSTRACT

This article compares the doctrine of scripture in Richard Hooker's *Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie* with that of John Calvin's *Christianae religionis institutio* (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*) to assess Hooker's Reformed credentials in this domain. Hooker departs from Reformed orthodoxy in two ways: first, as is generally recognized, in denying the autopisticity of Scripture; second, though less widely recognized, in decoupling *autopistis* from the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit. These departures must be weighed against countervailing considerations: the unanimity between Hooker and Calvin on the substance of *autopistis* and the need for Church testimony in attesting to Scripture; their disparate audiences and exigencies, including, in Hooker's case, possible Puritan association of *autopistis* with scriptural omniscience; Hooker's reliance on Article 6 of the Articles of Religion in its entirety in defending scriptural sufficiency; and the silence of Hooker's contemporary critics regarding his denial of *autopistis*.

KEYWORDS: *autopistis*, autopisticity, John Calvin, Richard Hooker, internal testimony of the Holy Spirit, Reformed theology, scriptural omniscience, sufficiency of scripture, Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion

Introduction

On the consensus view shared by many Anglicans, Richard Hooker is the theologian of the *via media* who fashioned a middle way 'between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism'.² Although John Keble, Hooker's

1. Mark LeTourneau is Professor of English at Weber State University, Ogden, Utah.

2. Nigel Voak, *Richard Hooker and Reformed Theology: A Study of Reason, Will and Grace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 1.

nineteenth-century high-church editor, is often credited (or blamed) for establishing this view, it originated earlier, in the years following the Restoration.³ The traditional interpretation continues to have its defenders,⁴ but since the 1990s it has been vigorously challenged by an equally traditional, though less familiar, estimate of Hooker: his status as a Reformed (Calvinist) apologist for the Elizabethan Church. This reading of Hooker is, of course, incompatible with the *via media* as defined above, at least in broad outline. What has been offered in its place, and why?

The recovery of Hooker as a Reformed theologian has several causes, the first being that his Reformed credentials were taken for granted in the early nineteenth century, even as Keble was painstakingly documenting Hooker's indebtedness to Aristotle and Aquinas.⁵ Robert Kavanagh continued this stream of research in the mid-twentieth century by documenting Hooker's affinities with Luther and Calvin.⁶ In the current debate, Torrance Kirby has argued that the *via media* is anachronistic as applied to the Elizabethan Church, as historians of the period have increasingly recognized.⁷ The anachronism is conceded

3. Peter Lake, 'Business as Usual? The Immediate Reception of Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 52.3 (2001), pp. 456-86 (456); Diarmaid MacCulloch, 'Richard Hooker's Reputation', *English Historical Review* 117.473 (2002), pp. 773-812 (801).

4. Lee Gibbs, 'Richard Hooker's *Via Media* Doctrine of Scripture and Tradition', *Harvard Theological Review* 95.2 (2002), pp. 227-35.

5. Egil Grislis, 'The Hermeneutical Problem in Richard Hooker', *Studies in Richard Hooker: Essays Preliminary to an Edition of his Works* (Cleveland, OH: Case Western University Press, 1972), pp. 159-206 (161), though Grislis admitted to skepticism about this consensus; Paul D. L. Avis, 'Richard Hooker and John Calvin', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 32.1 (1981), pp. 19-28 (19). McCulloch remarks that Keble deplored the Reformation and consistently downplayed evidence in Hooker's writings of his Reformed sympathies ('Reputation', pp. 809-10).

6. Robert Kavanagh, 'Reason and Nature in Hooker's *Polity*', PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1944.

7. W.J.T. Kirby, 'Richard Hooker as an Apologist for the Magisterial Reformation in England', in A. S. McGrade (ed.), *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community* (Tempe, AZ: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies [MRTS], 1997), pp. 219-33 (222 and the references cited there); 'Richard Hooker's Theory of Natural Law in the Context of Reformation Theology', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 30.3 (1999), pp. 681-703; 'The Context of Reformation Thought: The Influence of the Magisterial Reformers on Richard Hooker's Discourse on Natural Law', *The Theology of Richard Hooker in the Context of the Magisterial Reformation*, *Studies in Reformed Theology and History* 5 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Theological Seminary, 2000), pp. 1-22; 'Reason and Law', in *A Companion to Richard Hooker* (ed. Torrance Kirby; Boston, MA: Brill, 2008), pp. 251-71. Representative of the newer view is Alec Ryrie, who throughout his study of early modern devotion,

even by scholars who continue to endorse the consensus reading of Hooker.⁸ The other impetus for reevaluating Hooker as a Reformed theologian has been to compare his exposition of various doctrines with that of Reformed writers. For example, studies of Hooker's doctrines of natural law, predestination and eucharistic sacramentology have shown that his positions on these doctrines agree with those of the magisterial Reformers.⁹ As a result, the *via media* has given place to the belief that Hooker belongs to the Reformed tradition, subject to the important caveat that 'he is conscious of working within a broader catholic tradition'.¹⁰ This is the general position I adopt here.

Two further caveats must be reckoned with in assessing Hooker's theology as Reformed. One is that Reformed orthodoxy in the Church of England near the turn of the seventeenth century was polychromatic; a spectrum of formulations of a given doctrine could legitimately claim to be Reformed.¹¹ The other is that Hooker's commitment to Reformed theology varies with the doctrine in question. For example, his doctrine of justification as set forth in his sermon on that subject accords with that of the continental Reformers,¹² though Luther, Melancthon and Calvin all agree sufficiently on the forensic character of justification that Hooker's treatment might be described more as Reformational than Reformed in the stricter sense.¹³ By contrast, his eucharistic

(F' note continued)

Being Protestant in Reformation Britain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), applies 'Reformed Protestant' to conformist and puritan alike, though he scants Hooker (pp. 6-7 and the references cited there).

8. Thus Voak dismisses the *via media* characterization of the Elizabethan Church as 'an anachronistic act of revisionism' (*Richard Hooker*, p. 3) even as he finds Kirby's (counter)revisionist thesis of Hooker as a thoroughly Reformed thinker unpersuasive.

9. Voak, *Richard Hooker*, pp. 6-7. Surprisingly, Alistair McGrath describes Hooker's doctrine of justification as both a middle way between Catholic and Protestant soteriology and akin to Calvin's (*Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], pp. 291-292).

10. Avis, 'Richard Hooker', p. 28; for further caveats, see Lake, 'Business as Usual', p. 485; McCulloch, 'Reputation', p. 779.

11. Voak, *Richard Hooker*, pp. 2-3.

12. 'A Learned Discourse of Justification, Workes, and How the Foundation of Faith Is Overthrowne', *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker* (henceforth *FLE*), Vol. 5, *Tractates and Sermons* (ed. Laetitia Yeandle and Egil Grislis; Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1990), pp. 105-69.

13. McGrath, *Iustitia*, pp. 212, 223; Ellen T. Charry, 'The Beauty of Holiness: Practical Divinity', in Ralph McMichael (ed.), *The Vocation of Anglican Theology* (Norwich: SCM Press, 2014), pp. 196-243 (198).

sacramentology (*Lawes* 5.67) is virtually identical to Calvin's, opposed equally to consubstantiation and transubstantiation (with no dialog partner on the left to permit a *via media*). This variation stems from Hooker's characteristic intellectual independence.¹⁴

A test case for the variationist thesis is Hooker's doctrine of Scripture, or bibliology, for two reasons. First, there is near unanimity among scholars over several decades that Hooker denies the cardinal Reformed tenet that Scripture is self-authenticating, or autopistic.¹⁵ Second, Hooker's bibliology has not, to my knowledge, been subjected to the scrutiny that other doctrines have received from scholars who affirm his Reformed stance. I shall argue that while Hooker does deny the self-authenticating character of Scripture, that conclusion little supports a conventional *via media* reading of his doctrine of Scripture. To substantiate this thesis, I compare Hooker's statements about the sufficiency of Scripture in *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie* with Calvin's discussion in 1.6–7 of the *Christianae religionis institutio*. From this comparison, I conclude that the meaning of *autopistic* in Calvin is virtually identical to Hooker's understanding of the perfection of Scripture. Calvin and Hooker also agree that Church testimony plays a vital though ancillary role in fostering acceptance of Scripture as divine. Remaining differences can largely be explained by their disparate rhetorical situations and the teleological cast of Hooker's thought. Where Hooker deviates markedly from Reformed norms is in delinking the self-authentication of Scripture from the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit. These are two sides of the same coin in Reformed theology, but not in Hooker, who nonetheless assigns an indispensable role to the Spirit in authenticating Scripture.

14. McCulloch, 'Reputation', p. 781; Richard Bauckham, 'Richard Hooker and John Calvin: A Comment', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 32.1 (1981), pp. 29–33 (32); John K. Stafford, 'Richard Hooker's Doctrine of the Holy Spirit', PhD dissertation, University of Manitoba, p. 60.

15. Grislis, 'Hermeneutical Problem', p. 192; Grislis, 'Scriptural Hermeneutics', in *A Companion to Richard Hooker* (ed. Torrance Kirby; Boston, MA: Brill, 2008), pp. 273–304 (290); W. David Neelands, 'Hooker on Scripture, Reason, and Tradition', in McGrade, pp. 75–94 (87); Lee Gibbs, 'Book I', *FLE*, Vol. 6, Part 1, *Introductions; Commentary, Preface, Books I–IV* (ed. W. Speed Hill; Binghamton, NY: MRTS, 1993), pp. 81–124 (120); Voak, *Richard Hooker*, p. 226; 'Richard Hooker and the Principle of *Sola Scriptura*', *Journal of Theological Studies* 59.1 (2008), pp. 96–139 (129–30). Peter Lake tepidly dissented in *Anglicans and Puritans? Presbyterian and English Conformist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1982), p. 154.

Hooker and Calvin on the Veracity of Scripture

Before considering the specific question of *autopistis*, it will be useful to examine Hooker's and Calvin's wider doctrines of Scripture. Each presupposes the limitations of general revelation: the natural world in Calvin, natural law in Hooker. Calvin begins 1.6 by observing that there are two channels of divine revelation: nature and Scripture. While both give accurate knowledge of God, natural revelation aggravates human culpability before him. The revelation in Scripture also does this, but goes further in two ways: clarifying the revelation in nature and proffering salvation. God is thus revealed only as creator in nature, but as both creator and redeemer in Scripture (1.6.1). In Hooker, natural revelation takes the form of the law of reason.¹⁶ The context for Hooker's *locus classicus* on Scripture in *Laws* 1.14 is an intricate proof in 1.11 demonstrating the inadequacy of natural law as a means of salvation. While human beings desire God as the highest good, this desire cannot be met in this life because it demands a moral perfection of which humans are incapable; imperfectly obeying natural law does not merit an ultimate reward.¹⁷ Therefore, either salvation is unattainable or it is not bestowed for good works, but instead revealed as supernatural laws,¹⁸ which, however, do not displace natural law: 'When supernaturall duties are necessarily enacted, naturall are not rejected as needlesse.'¹⁹ As for Calvin, Scripture is for Hooker given to proffer salvation, a fact crucial to assessing his defense of its sufficiency.

A second similarity is that each writer sets his discussion in a polemical context. This is clearer in Hooker's case, as Kirby has emphasized, because Hooker at the outset declares his 'finall resolute persuasion':

Surely the present forme of Church government which the lawes of this land have established, is such, as no lawe of God, nor reason of man hath hitherto bene alleaged of force sufficient to prove they do ill, who to the uttermost of their power withstand the alteration thereof. *Contrariwise*, The other which in stead of it we are required to accept, is only by error

16. *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: Preface, Books I-IV* (ed. George Edelen; Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1977), 1.5.1; *FLE* 1.72-74. All subsequent citations of the *Laws* are from this volume, with these caveats: Citations of the form '1.5.1' are to the 1888 Keble edition of Hooker's works and denote book, chapter and section of the *Laws*; citations of the form '*FLE* 1.119:26-27' as in n. 17 denote volume, page(s), and line(s) of the Folger edition, in conformity with *FLE* citation format.

17. 1.11.1-4; *FLE* 1.110-115.

18. 1.11.5-6; *FLE* 1.115-119.

19. 1.12.1; *FLE* 1.119:26-27.

and misconcept named the ordinance of Jesus Christ, no one proove as yet brought forth whereby it may cleerely appeare to be so in very deede.²⁰

The polemical context for Calvin's discussion in 1.7 is less obvious because he describes the chapter as a 'digression' prompted by a 'pernicious error' demanding separate rebuttal, namely, the claim that the authority of Scripture depends on the judgment of the Church (1.7.1). Thus, Calvin and Hooker addressed different audiences for different purposes: Hooker sought to persuade advanced Protestants in the Church of England to accept the Elizabethan Settlement; Calvin sought to discredit a plank of Roman Catholic apologetic concerning biblical authority.

In rejecting the ultimate authority of the Church to arbitrate scriptural authority, Calvin makes affirmative and refutative arguments. Both types are anticipated by the title of 1.7: 'The Spirit is truly the one by whose testimony it is proper for Scripture to be confirmed, so that its certain authority may be established; and it is an impious notion that one's faith depends on the judgment of the Church.'²¹ I analyze these arguments below. Of interest here is that Calvin asserts the autopisticity of Scripture in the context of the testimony of the Holy Spirit – the affirmative thesis in the chapter title – and not conversely. Calvin's exposition bears this out; he discusses 'the internal testimony of the Spirit' (*interiore Spiritus testimonio*) in 1.7.4 before taking up *autopistis* in 1.7.5. The dependent status of *autopistis* is evident from the passage in which it is asserted:

Let this [point] therefore remain firm: those whom the Holy Spirit has inwardly taught willingly acquiesce to Scripture, and it is even self-authenticating (*αὐτόπιστον* [*autopiston*]); nor is it proper for it to be subjected to demonstration and reasons, because the certitude which it merits with us it attains by the testimony of the Spirit.²²

20. *FLE* 1.2:16-24.

21. 'Quo testimonio Scripturam oporteat sanciri, nempe Spiritus, ut certa constet eius auctoritas; atque impium esse commentum, fidem eius pendere ab Ecclesiae iudicio.' http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutio1/Page_57.html; all subsequent citations of the *Institutio* are from this site. The translations from the *Institutes* are my own. I am indebted to Professor Kathy Payne for reviewing them and making invaluable suggestions. Any remaining errors or infelicities are mine.

22. 'Maneat ergo hoc fixum, quos Spiritus sanctus intus docuit, solide acquiescere in Scriptura, et hanc quidam esse *αὐτόπιστον*, neque demonstrationi et rationibus subiici eam fas esse: quam tamen meretur apud nos certitudinem, Spiritus testimonio consequi' (Calvin, 1.7.5, p. 61).

Scripture is self-authenticating because of (*quam*) the Spirit's testimony, not in and of itself, as the reflexive pronoun in the English rendering may suggest. To my knowledge, Calvin never reverses the direction of dependency, or asserts *autopistis* apart from the Spirit's testimony, corroborating that the former depends on the latter.

Although he refuses to subject the authority of Scripture to 'demonstration and reasons' or to formally define *autopistis*, Calvin does indicate what it means in the opening sentences of the preceding subsection: 'To recall what I said not long ago, the credibility of doctrine is not established before we are indubitably persuaded that its author is God. Therefore, the highest proof of Scripture throughout is taken from God speaking in his own person.'²³ The terms 'credibility' (*fidem*), 'be persuaded' (*persuasam sit*), and 'proof' (*probatio*) show that the issue is the conviction that the Bible is the Word of God, the ground for such a conviction being that God himself speaks in and through it. This is why Scripture is self-authenticating for Calvin.

Turning now to Hooker, he can, as is well known, speak in exalted language about the veracity of Scripture. A passage in which he does so pertains to *autopistis*, because in it Hooker makes much the same claim for Scripture as Calvin in the passage just cited. In Book 2, Hooker is refuting the Puritan axiom '[t]hat Scripture is the onely rule of all things which in this life may be done by men'.²⁴ In Chapter 7, Hooker examines '[t]heir opinion concerning the force of argumentes taken from humane authoritie for the ordering of mens actions or perswasions', preliminary to considering polity and ceremonies in Books 3 and 4. Scholars agree that Hooker sought to rehabilitate the reputation of reason because his Puritan opponents 'never use[d] reason so willinglie as to disgrace reason'²⁵ in adjudicating spiritual matters. This tendency is illustrated by an epigraph to the chapter, a passage from Thomas Cartwright ('T. C.'), chief spokesperson for the Puritan cause:

'When the question is of the authoritie of a man, it holdeth neither affirmatively nor negatively. The reason is, because the infirmitie of man can neither attaine to the perfection of any thing whereby hee might speake all things that are to be spoken of it, neither yet be free from error in those things which he speaketh...'²⁶

23. 'Tenendum quod nuper dixi, non ante stabiliri doctrinae fidem, quam nobis indubie persuasum sit auctorem eius esse Deum. Itaque summa Scripturae probatio passim a Dei loquentis persona sumitur' (Calvin, 1.7.4, p. 57).

24. Title of Book 2; *FLE*, 1.143.

25. 3.8.4; *FLE* 1.221:28.

26. *FLE* 1.174:24-29.

This distrust of reason led the Puritans to the criterion for human conduct in the title of Book 2 above, a view William Haugaard christened 'scriptural omnicompetence'.²⁷ After refuting Puritan exegesis of New Testament, Old Testament, and patristic texts on which scriptural omnicompetence rests in Chapters 1–6, Hooker takes up the broader epistemological question in Chapter 7. It is in this context that his remarks about the supreme veracity of Scripture occur.

After refuting Cartwright's objections, Hooker proposes a hierarchy of certitude that descends from sensory perception or assent to self-evident truths ('intuitive beholding') to logical demonstration to probability:

The greatest assurance generally with all men is that which we have by plaine aspect and intuitive beholding. Where we can not attayne unto this, there what appeareth to be true by strong and invincible demonstration, such as wherein it is not by any way possible to be deceived, thereunto the mind doth necessarily assent, neyther is it in the choyce therof to do otherwise. And in case these both do fayle, then which way probability leadeeth, thether the mind doth evermore incline.²⁸

Then, unexpectedly, he places knowledge derived from Scripture above 'plaine aspect' in the ranking:

Scripture with Christian men being received as the word of God, that for which we have probable, yea, that which we have necessary reason for, yea, that which we see with our eies is not thought so sure as that which the scripture of God teacheth; because wee hold that his speech revealeth there what himself seeth, and therefore the strongest prooffe of all, and the most necessarily assented unto by us (which do thus receive the scripture) is the scripture.²⁹

While initially surprising, this valuation coheres with Hooker's hierarchy. Scripture is completely veridical not only because it issues from God, who can neither err nor mislead,³⁰ but because it records his own perceptions. If what a person sees is the most certain form of human testimony, and if God is infinitely superior to humans, what he sees is as certain as it can possibly be. This conclusion was doubtless intended to assure Hooker's opponents that he honored Scripture as highly as they did. Equally important, it accords with Calvin's view. But if this is true, and if Calvin's estimate forms the substance of his

27. 'Books II, III, & IV', *FLE*, Vol. 6, Part 1, pp. 125-81 (163).

28. 2.7.5; *FLE* 1.179:10-18.

29. 2.7.5; *FLE* 1.179:18-25.

30. 2.6.1; *FLE* 1.167:27-28, cited in Grislis, 'Scriptural Hermeneutics', p. 278.

doctrine of *autopistis*, then one plank of the case against Hooker on this count is loosened.

The Sufficiency of Scripture in Lawes 1.14

Crucial evidence against the Reformed pedigree of Hooker's bibliography is drawn from 1.14, which therefore invites close reading. 1.14 is part of Hooker's exposition of supernatural law begun in 1.11. Its title, 'The sufficiency of scripture unto the end for which it was instituted', provides two clues as to how his argument should be construed. First, 'the sufficiency of scripture' alludes to Article 6 of the 39 Articles of the Church of England (1571). The English text of the article begins thus:

Of the sufficiency of the holy Scriptures for saluation Holye Scripture conteyneth all thinges necessarie to saluation: so that whatsoeuer is not read therein, nor may be proued thereby, is not to be required of anye man, that it shoulde be beleued as an article of the fayth, or be thought requisite necessarie to saluation.³¹

Like *sola scriptura* itself, Article 6 is 'a soteriological principle',³² a statement of the role the Bible plays in salvation, which leads to the second point about the title: it reiterates that Hooker's thought is thoroughly teleological. This is already evident from his definition of law in Book 1, where 'ende' likewise means 'purpose':

All things that are have some operation not violent or casuall. Neither doth any thing ever begin to exercise the same without some foreconceaved ende for which it worketh. And the ende which it worketh for is not obtained, unlesse the worke be also fit to obtaine it by. For unto every ende every operation will not serve. That which doth

31. The English text is from G.R. Evans and J. Robert Wright (eds.), *The Anglican Tradition: A Handbook of Sources* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), p. 157. The Latin text runs as follows: 'De diuinis Scripturis, quod sufficient ad salutem Scriptura sacra continet omnia, quae ad salutem sunt necessaria, ita vt quicquid in ea nec legitur, neque inde probari potest, non sit a quoquam exigendum, vt tanquam articulus fidei credatur, aut ad salutis necessitatem requiri putetur'; it is from E. J. Bucknell, *A Theological Introduction to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England* (New York: Longman, 1953), p. 162. Cf. the Belgic Confession (1561), Article 7, 'De Perfectione Sacrae Scripturae': 'We believe that this Holy Scripture perfectly comprehends the divine will, and that all that a man must believe to be saved is in it sufficiently taught' (*Nous croyons que cette Écriture Sainte contient parfaitement la volonté divine, et que tout ce que l'homme doit croire pour être sauvé, y est suffisamment enseigné* [from Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*; ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds3.iv.viii.html, p. 388]).

32. Kirby, 'Richard Hooker as an Apologist', p. 230.

assigne unto each thing the kinde, that which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the forme and measure of working, the same we tearme a *Lawe*.³³

Resuming his argument in Chapter 11, Hooker begins 1.14 with a teleology of scripture: '[T]he principal intent of scripture is to deliver the lawes of duties supernatural.'³⁴ He then answers three disputed questions about scriptural sufficiency, the first of which is relevant here: whether Scripture contains all things necessary for salvation. He grants that it does, but as constrained by its 'soteriological perfection'³⁵: '[A]lbeit scripture do professe to conteyne in it all thingse which are necessarye unto salvation; yet the meaning cannot be simplye of all thinges that are necessarye, but all things that are necessarye in some certaine kind or forme.'³⁶ The principal reason that Hooker insists on this qualified construal of scriptural sufficiency is that there are two matters necessary to salvation to which Scripture in principle cannot attest. The first is the scope of the canon:

If onely those things be necessarye, as surely none else are, without the knowledge and practise whereof it is not the will and pleasure of God to make any ordinarie graunt of salvation, it may be notwithstanding, and oftentimes hath been demaunded, how the bookes of holie scripture conteyne in them all necessarie things, when of things necessarie the verie chiefest is to knowe what bookes we are bound to esteeme holie, which poynt it is confest impossible for the scripture it selfe to teach.³⁷

The second is scriptural authority itself, whose 'certaine . . . forme' is

all things which are necessarye to be knowne that we may be saved, but knowne with presupposall of knowledge concerning certaine principles whereof it receaveth us already perswaded, and then instructeth us in all the residue that are necessarie. In the number of these principles one is the sacred authoritie of scripture.³⁸

Because Scripture attests neither to the scope of its own canon nor to its own authority, these must be ascertained from sources beside Scripture: 'Being therefore perswaded by other meanes that these scriptures are the oracles of God, them selves do then teach us the rest, and laye before us all the duties which God requireth at our hands as

33. 1.2.1; *FLE* 1.58:22-29.

34. 1.14.1; *FLE* 1.124:31-32.

35. Grislis, 'Scriptural Hermeneutics', p. 282.

36. 1.14.1; *FLE* 1.125:32-126:3.

37. 1.14.1; *FLE* 1.125:6-14.

38. 1.14.1; *FLE* 1.126:3-10.

necessary unto salvation.³⁹ Hooker evidently limits the principle of *sola scriptura* so as to exclude self-attestation. These passages raise two questions: first, what are the 'other meanes' by which canon and authority are established as prolegomena to scriptural sufficiency?; second, why does Hooker limit scriptural sufficiency so as to exclude its autopisticity?

One 'other meanes' Hooker has in mind is the exercise of sanctified reason. In rehabilitating the reputation of reason in religious disputes, Hooker remarks, 'For whatsoever we believe concerning salvation by Christ, although the scripture be therein the ground of our beliefe; yet the authoritie of man is, if we marke it, the key which openeth the dore of entrance into the knowledge of the scripture.'⁴⁰ Church authority also does this: 'That which al mens experience teacheth them may not in any wise be denied. And by experience we all know, that the first outward motive leading men so to esteeme of the scripture is the authority of Gods Church.'⁴¹ For Hooker, confessing the sufficiency of Scripture normally begins with Church testimony rather than Scripture itself. This conclusion prompts the question of how far Church attestation of Scripture deserves assent, which brings us back to *Institutio* 1.7.3, where Calvin takes up this question against Rome.

As noted, the 'pernicious error' Calvin refutes in 1.7 is the Catholic doctrine that Scripture is authenticated by the Church. Among the questions the Church declared its competency to judge were the divine origin of Scripture, that it 'comes from God', and the scope of the canon: '[I]t depends,' they say, 'on the determination of the Church to which Scripture[s] reverence is owed, and which books should be recommended [for inclusion in] its canon [catalog]' (1.7.1). In support of this position, Catholic apologists frequently pointed to a sentence in an anti-Manichean treatise of Augustine's⁴² 'where he denies,' says Calvin, 'that he would have believed in the gospel, unless the authority of the Church had moved him' (1.7.3; *ubi se Evangelio crediturum negat, nisi ecclesiae ipsum moveret auctoritas*).⁴³ Calvin interprets the statement in the context of the Manichean controversy to refer to those who have not yet believed the gospel, summing up his rebuttal thus: 'Augustine is not in

39. *FLE* 1.126:10-13.

40. 2.7.3; *FLE* 1.177:27-30; cited in Bucknell, *Introduction*, p. 161, and Grislis, 'Hermeneutical Problem', p. 193.

41. 3.8.14: *FLE* 1.231:19-22; cited in Grislis, 'Hermeneutical Problem', p. 194.

42. Grislis, 'Scriptural Hermeneutics', p. 291; 'Hermeneutical Problem', p. 206, n. 74.

43. Calvin, 1.7.3, p. 59.

that passage teaching the faith of the pious to be founded on the authority of the Church, nor does he understand the certitude of the gospel to depend on [the Church, but] simply that there would be no certitude about the Gospel for unbelievers [such] that they should profit from Christ thereby unless the consensus of the Church should impel them.⁴⁴

Calvin's strictures on Church authority in relation to *sola scriptura* intersect with Hooker's on the extent of the canon. For although Calvin names fixing the canon of the Bible as a competency Rome had arrogated to itself, he does not mention it again when he asserts the autopisticity of Scripture; that doctrine counters only the Catholic claim to guarantee the divine origin of Scripture. Thus, Calvin tacitly accepts Hooker's explicit insistence that Scripture does not reflexively circumscribe its own canonicity.⁴⁵ This conclusion is confirmed by two concessions he makes: (1) Augustine appeals to Church authority as the *consensus fidelium* to buttress the authority of Scripture; (2) the Church provides to unbelievers an 'isagogy' or introduction to prepare them for belief. This isagogic function of the Church anticipates how for Hooker accepting canon and authority prepares inquirers to receive supernatural law, on analogy with the propaedeutic relation of grammar to rhetoric:

Seeing then no man can pleade eloquentlie, unlesse he be able first to speake, it followeth that habilitie of speech is in this case a thing most necessarie. Notwithstanding every man would thinke it ridiculous, that he which undertaketh by writing to instruct an Orator, should therefore deliver all the precepts of Grammar, because his profession is to deliver precepts necessarye unto speech, yet so, that they which are to receyve them be taught before hand, so much of that which is thereunto necessarye as comprehendeth the skill of speaking.⁴⁶

Thus Calvin and Hooker concur that Church authority is needed to attest the scope of the canon.

The case is different with scriptural self-attestation. Here Hooker denies what Calvin avers, as commentators agree. It is true that he more forcefully denies that Scripture circumscribes its own canon than that it

44. 'Non ergo illic docet Augustinus fundatum esse piorum fidem in ecclesiae auctoritate, nec Evangelii certitudinem inde pendere intelligit: verum simpliciter nullam fore Evangelii certitudinem infidelibus, ut inde Christo lucrifiant, nisi ecclesiae consensus eos impellat' (Calvin, 1.7.3, p. 59).

45. What Calvin leaves implicit, Karl Barth makes explicit. Expounding the authority of the Church to fix the canon of Scripture, he admits, 'I have first to be told by the Church which Scripture is Holy Scripture' (*Church Dogmatics* I.2.598; study edition [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2009], vol. 5, p. 146).

46. 1.14.1; *FLE* 1.125:24-32.

authenticates itself; the former he declares to be ‘confest impossible’, while the latter he mildly classes among the principles that must be taught before Scripture can save. But this difference of degree does not materially alter the conclusion, particularly since he denies self-authentication just as emphatically elsewhere (see the quotation from 2.4.2 [n. 63] below). Nor is it likely that Hooker is discussing only canonicity in both passages. It might be argued that the determination of which books belong in the canon and the conviction that ‘these scriptures are the oracles of God’ are two sides of the same coin, like *autopistis* and the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit. Admittedly, it is puzzling that Hooker glides without transition from canon to authority, but this may be because they are treated together in Article 6. Even if the analogy to *autopistis* and the Spirit’s testimony is granted, it fails to establish the conclusion. Those two doctrines remain distinct; refuting Hooker’s denial of *autopistis* demands that canon and authority be equated, for which I find no evidence in the *Lawes*. I therefore concur that Hooker denies that Scripture authenticates itself in 1.14 and to that extent departs from Reformed bibliology.

Hooker’s Reasons for Denying the Self-Authentication of Scripture

It remains to answer (2): Why does Calvin affirm, and Hooker deny, that Scripture authenticates itself? Part of the answer derives from their divergent rhetorical situations and dialog partners. We have seen that Calvin in 1.7.3 is refuting Roman Catholic polemics: 1.7 is followed in 1.9 by a rebuttal, as the chapter title has it, of ‘[f]anatics who hasten to revelation because they have esteemed Scripture less [and so] overturn all principles of piety’ (*Omnia pietatis principii evertere fanaticos, qui posthabita Scriptura ad revelationem transvolent*). The ‘fanatics’ against whom Calvin inveighs were the Libertines,⁴⁷ who, according to his scornful invective, devalued Scripture because they believed they received revelation directly from the Holy Spirit: ‘pleading most conceitedly the teaching office of the Spirit, they reject every act of reading [Scripture] and mock simple(tons) who, dead and perishing, as they themselves say, still pursue the letter’.⁴⁸ Confronted by opponents

47. John T. McNeil (ed.), *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (trans. Ford Lewis Battles; Library of Christian Classics; Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1960), p. 95, n. 1.

48. ‘Spiritus magisterium fastuosissime obtendentes, lectionem ipsi omnem respuunt, et eorum irrident simplicitatem, qui emortuam et occidentem, ut ipsi vocant, literam adhuc consecantur’ (Calvin, 1.9, p. 69).

on the right and the left, Calvin forged a middle way between them with the complementary doctrines of *autopistis* and the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit. On the right, the doctrine that the Spirit produced an inward conviction that the Scriptures are divine opposed Roman Catholic pretensions to an authority over Scripture. In so doing, it countered the 'tyranny' (*tyrannidem*) with which Calvin charges the Roman teaching (1.7.1). On the left, these doctrines countered the subjectivism inherent in boasts of receiving direct revelation from the Spirit, particularly when combined with Calvin's axiom that Spirit and Word work in harmony (1.9.2-3). While the self-attestation of Scripture to a believer is by definition subjective, mutual agreement between Word and Spirit serves as a check on excessive subjectivism.

Hooker wrote in quite a different situation, as indicated by the above quotation from Preface 1.2. He is not defending Scripture against detractors like the Libertines; as noted, his esteem for it was common ground with Puritan partisans. Rather, the limits he places on scriptural sufficiency counter the Puritan doctrine of scriptural omniscience; this is the point of the analogy to the relation between grammar and rhetoric quoted in the section above. Moreover, his discussion of Scripture in 1.14 is shaped by the first sentence of Article 6 in its entirety. Hooker is not at odds with Rome over arrogating authority over Scripture. Instead, he takes issue with its reliance on unwritten tradition, which presupposes that Scripture is insufficient. Tellingly, Hooker dismisses such tradition because it cannot be proven to have come from God, as Scripture can:

[T]hat which [Catholic apologists] should confirme, who clayme so great reverence unto traditions, is, that the same traditions are necessarily to be acknowledged divine and holye. For wee do not reject them only because they are not in the Scripture, but because they are neyther in the Scripture, nor can otherwise sufficiently by any reason be proved to be of God.⁴⁹

The echo of the clause in Article 6 about doctrines not provable from Scripture is very distinct, and that clause rejects extracanonical tradition in establishing doctrine. Hooker summarizes the dispute over the sufficiency of Scripture at the end of Book 2, in language echoing his qualified version of scriptural sufficiency in 1.14:

Two opinions therefore there are concerning sufficiencie of holy scripture, each extremely opposite unto the other, and both repugnant unto truth. The schooles of Rome teach scripture to be so insufficient, as if, except traditions were added, it did not conteine all revealed and

49. 1.14.5; *FLE* 1.129:19-24.

supernaturall truth, which absolutely is necessary for the children of men in this life to know that they may in the next be saved. Others justly condemning this opinion growe likewise unto a daungerous extremitie, as if scripture did not onely containe all things in that kinde necessary, but all thinges simply, and in such sorte that to doe any thing according to any other lawe were not only unnecessary, but even opposite to salvation, unlawfull and sinfull.⁵⁰

While *autopistis* countered Roman claims of an institutional prerogative to authenticate Scripture, it would be irrelevant to contesting Rome's trust in unwritten tradition. Insofar as the doctrine bears on Hooker's situation, then, it applies only to his Puritan opponents. Two facets of their thought are germane to *autopistis*: scriptural omnicompetence and criticism of Hooker in *A Christian Letter*.

Belief in scriptural omnicompetence may have deterred Hooker from asserting autopisticity. Gibbs defines the self-authentication of Scripture in Puritan thought as its omnicompetence, 'as containing all the truth humans need to know'.⁵¹ Calvin certainly does not make this equation, nor does Hooker. Neither do Puritan theologians, who are quite capable of discoursing about one without the other.⁵² Gibbs' equation, though mistaken, is nonetheless instructive, because it suggests why Hooker denies autopisticity: If the Puritans tacitly subsumed autopisticity under omnicompetence, to concede the former might appear also to concede the latter, thereby undermining not just the micro-argument about scriptural authority but the macro-argument about polity. The conjecture bears on Hooker's status as a Reformed theologian: denying *autopistis* would not immediately disqualify him if the concept bore in his debates with the Puritans a nonstandard sense.

The question is whether Puritans did in fact associate scriptural omnicompetence with scriptural self-authentication. They may have done so if the disciplinarian doctrine developed from that of the continental Reformed. A scripture held to be self-authenticating need not also be omnicompetent (hence the doctrine of *adiaphora*), but a scripture judged omnicompetent would presumably also have to be self-authenticating. The narrower Reformed doctrine could thus be

50. 2.8.7; *FLE* 1.191:16-25.

51. 'Book I', p. 120.

52. For example, Travers on omnicompetence (*The Second Replie*) or Whitaker on *autopistis* (*Disputation on Holy Scripture*), cited in Nigel Atkinson, *Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture, Tradition, and Reason: Reformed Theologian of the Church of England?* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), pp. 84 and 109, respectively.

easily incorporated into the more expansive Puritan one.⁵³ If Puritans associated omnicompetence and autopisticity in this way, the fact that Hooker embeds his denials of the latter in Books 2 and 3 in refuting disciplinarian arguments for the former is satisfactorily explained.

Hooker's denial of *autopistis* also needs to be evaluated in relation to *A Christian Letter* (1599), published anonymously, according to its full title, by

certaine English Protestantes, unfayned favorers of the present state of religion, authorized and professed in England; unto that Reverend and Learned man, Maister R. Hoo. requiring resolution in certayne matters of doctrine (which seeme to overthrowe the foundation of Christian Religion, and of the Church among us) expreslie containd in his five bookes of Ecclesiasticall Policie.⁵⁴

The presumptive author of *A Christian Letter* is Andrew Willett, a moderate Puritan who, quite un-anonymously, attacked Hooker posthumously in print on the same grounds and in the same order as occur in the *Letter*.⁵⁵ Section 3, titled 'The holy scripture containe all thinges necessarie to salvation', begins by quoting the first sentence of Article 6 as a summary of what the Church of England teaches and contrasts it with what 'You [Hooker] on the other side saye'. There follow quotations from Books 1 and 2 of the *Lawes* from which the writers conclude that 'although you exclude traditions as a part of supernaturall trueth, yet you infer that the light of nature teacheth some knowledge naturall which is necessarie to salvation, and that the Scripture is a supplement and making perfect of that knowledge'.⁵⁶ The writers then demand of Hooker whether natural knowledge of God exists outside Scripture, posing the question as a dilemma: 'If you thinke, no: how then say you before: Not the scripture severallie [alone], but nature and scripture jointlie, be complete unto everlasting felicitie? If you say yea: how then

53. A caveat is in order. Surveying the articulation of scriptural omnicompetence in medieval and Reformation England, Atkinson (*Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture*, pp. 80-90) observes that Cartwright followed earlier writers in arguing for an expanded role for Old Testament law as a contemporary norm for civil and ecclesial legislation. As might be expected, debate about *autopistis* did not arise in this context. What this history may show is that *autopistis* was similarly orthogonal (though still relevant) to the debate between Hooker and advanced Protestants, in agreement with the silence of *A Christian Letter* on the matter.

54. *A Christian Letter (ACL)*, *FLE*, Vol. 4: *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: Attack and Response* (ed. John Booty; Binghamton, NY: MTRS, 1982), 6:2-7.

55. McCulloch, 'Reputation', p. 782; Lake, 'Business as Usual', pp. 460-461.

56. *FLE* 4.11:21-24.

agree you with the beleaf of our Church: which affirmeth, that holy scripture contayneth all thinges necessarie to salvation?⁵⁷

This challenge is significant for its subject matter: it radiates animosity toward natural law (which Calvin did not share).⁵⁸ It does not criticize Hooker for qualifying scriptural sufficiency regarding canon or authority.⁵⁹ The writers suspect Hooker of infidelity to the Articles (a serious charge against a priest of the Church of England in this period) because he countenances natural revelation, a concession they find incompatible with Article 6. They do not accuse Hooker of denying the sufficiency of Scripture on the perhaps more damaging ground that he unambiguously teaches that Scripture is unable to attest its own authority as a truth necessary to salvation. Voak concludes that Hooker departs from the Reformed orthodoxy of Article 6 because he denies the autopisticity of Scripture.⁶⁰ One wonders why Hooker's contemporary critics did not make the same argument. They were certainly in a position to do so; William Whitaker's *Disputation on Holy Scripture* (1588) had argued for *autopistis* (against Roman Catholics, as Calvin had done a generation earlier). That they did not press this argument suggests that *autopistis* had not yet become a touchstone of confessional orthodoxy, and that it should be employed judiciously in evaluating Hooker's bibliology.⁶¹

57. *FLE* 4.13:7-10.

58. Cf. the discussion of *Institutio* 1.6 above and Kirby, 'Richard Hooker's Theory', pp. 696-99.

59. Gibbs, 'Book I', p. 120, cites Hooker's qualified formulation of scriptural sufficiency as the source of the unease expressed *A Christian Letter*, but this is not the object of the queries in Section 3.

60. Voak, *Richard Hooker*, p. 121.

61. Reformed confessions themselves support this conclusion. Article 5 of the Belgic Confession defends the authority of Scripture by appeal to the testimony of the Holy Spirit without appeal to autopisticity: 'We receive all these books [listed in Article 4] alone as holy and canonical, to regulate, found, and establish our faith; and we fully believe all the things which are contained in them, not so much because the Church receives and approves them as such, but principally because the Holy Spirit testifies in our heart that they are from God, and that they are authenticated by themselves. For the blind themselves can perceive that the things predicted in them are being fulfilled' (*Nous recevons tous ces livres-là seulement, pour saints et canoniques pour régler, fonder, et établir notre foi, et croyons pleinement toutes les choses qui y sont contenues, non pas tant parce que l'Église les reçoit et approuve tels, mais principalement parce que le Saint-Esprit nous rend témoignage en notre coeur, qu'ils sont de Dieu, et aussi qu'ils sont approuvés tels par eux-mêmes; car les aveugles mêmes peuvent apercevoir que les choses adviennent qui y sont prédites* [Belgic Confession, in Schaff, *Creeeds*, pp. 386-387]). The evidence from fulfilled prophecy does not support autopisticity

Allowing for these qualifications, the question persists: Why does Hooker extol the perfect veracity of Scripture but dispute that it attests to its veracity? The analogy to the preparatory role of grammar to rhetoric is irrelevant here. Supernatural law does presuppose natural law, just as accepting the teaching of Scripture presupposes a conviction of the authority of Scripture: 'The maine principle whereupon our beliefe of all thinges [in Scripture] contayned dependeth is, that the scriptures are the oracles of God him selfe.'⁶² But whereas natural and supernatural law jointly testify to how salvation is obtained, believing that Scripture authenticates itself differs from believing that it teaches one doctrine over another. Hooker evidently conceived the epistemological relation between natural and supernatural law differently from the one between acknowledging the authority of Scripture and confessing its teaching. For Scripture to affirm its own authority yields, he argues, an infinite regress:

[I]t is not the worde of God which doth or possibly can assure us, that we doe well to thinke it his worde. For if any one booke of scripture did give testimony to all; yet still that Scripture which giveth credite to the rest, would require another Scripture to give credite unto it: neither could we ever come unto any pause whereon to rest our assurance this way, so that unlesse beside scripture there were some thing that might assure us that we do well, we could not thinke we do well, no not in being assured that scripture is a sacred and holie rule of well doing.⁶³

Armed with this argument, Hooker rejected autopisticity, yet he maintained that the Bible could be authenticated without it.⁶⁴

(F'note continued)

per se but points rather to internal evidence for the divine inspiration of Scripture, such as Calvin assembles in *Institutio* 1.8 (Voak, *Richard Hooker*, pp. 108-109). Compare this with the Westminster Confession (1643), which, besides adducing the 'inward work of the Holy Spirit' as the primary ground for the conviction of its divine authority (1.1.5), states that Scripture 'is to be received as the Word of God' because 'God (who is truth itself) is the author thereof' (Westminster Confession of Faith 1.1.4, in Schaff, *Creeeds*, pp. 602-603). This affirms no more than Hooker does in *Lawes* 2.7.5 and so falls equally short of *autopistis*. These representative examples suggest that *autopistis* did not attain confessional status even in Reformed churches.

62. 3.8.13; *FLE* 1.231:4-6.

63. 2.4.2; *FLE* 1.153:17-25.

64. Voak (*Richard Hooker*, p. 132), observes that in 3.8 Hooker uses the first person plural 'we' when asserting the sufficiency of Scripture to identify himself with the Reformed position. Hooker also employs inclusive 'we' to insinuate common ground with his opponents before making the regress argument just quoted: 'we all believe that the Scriptures of God are sacred because '[w]e have for

Two secondary means of authentication were sanctified reason and Church authority. In the next section, we examine the primary one.

Hooker and the Internal Testimony of the Holy Spirit

Later Reformed writers followed Calvin in treating autopistis as inseparable from the internal testimony of the Spirit.⁶⁵ In view of this inseparability, we might expect Hooker to deny the latter along with the former. But this is not so; Hooker insists on the Spirit's testimony, in characteristic association with his respect for redeemed reason.

John Stafford claims that Hooker regards the Holy Spirit as 'the interior witness to the truth of the Scriptures in the believer',⁶⁶ the substance of the Reformed teaching. However, Hooker does so while rejecting the Puritan antithesis between the Spirit and human reason as 'a false dichotomy'.⁶⁷ A passage illustrating how complementary he regarded the two in attesting the divinity of Scripture is in 3.8, which refutes Puritan arguments that ecclesiastical government must be founded solely on Scripture and not also on reason:

Neither can I thinke that when grave and learned men do sometime hold, that of this principle [the divinity of scripture] there is no prooffe but by

(Footnote continued)

this point a demonstration sound and infallible' (2.4.2; *FLE* 1.153:13-16), a passage also discussed by Voak (p. 130). What this demonstration is remains a tantalizing puzzle. In view of Hooker's concession that natural law cannot teach supernatural truths and Puritan distrust of it (evident from §3 of *ACL*), it is most unlikely to be based on natural law, *pace* Voak (p. 131). Their distrust of reason further suggests that Hooker continues to assume, as in 2.7.5, quoted in the section 'Hooker and Calvin on the Veracity of Scripture', that demonstration is inferior in certitude to Scripture. In any event, the assertion suggests that Hooker and the Puritans agreed quite substantially on scriptural sufficiency, so that the 'demonstration' could merely be mentioned.

65. Voak, *Richard Hooker*, pp. 110-21.

66. 'Richard Hooker's Doctrine', p. 109.

67. Stafford, 'Richard Hooker's Doctrine', p. 68; Grislis faults Whitaker among Puritan writers for this fallacy in 'Scriptural Hermeneutics', p. 295. To say that Hooker gives a large place to reason in authenticating Scripture implies neither that he was a rationalist (one of several characterizations surveyed by Grislis, 'Hermeneutical Problem', pp. 164-65) nor that he regarded reason as an autonomous faculty (*pace* Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?* p. 153). Reason in Lake's sense is natural reason, which Hooker recognizes alongside of reason corrupted by sin and redeemed by grace (Grislis, 'Scriptural Hermeneutics', pp. 297, 299). It is reason in this third sense which bears on its relation to the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit.

the testimony of the spirit, which assureth our harts therin, it is their meaning to exclude utterly all force which any kind of reason may have in that behalfe; but I rather incline to interpret such their speeches, as if they had more expressly set downe, that other motives and inducements, be they never so strong and consonant unto reason, are notwithstanding uneffectual of them selves to work faith concerning this principle, if the special grace of the holy ghost concur not to the inlightning of our minds.⁶⁸

In attributing faith in Scripture to the Spirit, Hooker seconds Calvin: '[T]he word does not find faith in the hearts of humans before it is sealed by the internal testimony of the Spirit' (*non ante fidem reperiet sermo in hominum cordibus quam interioro Spiritus testimonio obsignatur*).⁶⁹ Hooker accents the Spirit's role in producing the faith that Scripture is divine and subordinates reason to it, disparaging the latter as 'uneffectual' apart from the Spirit's confirmation. In this judgment he is more severe than Calvin, who regards the conviction, produced by the Spirit, that God speaks truly in Scripture as 'such knowledge [as that] with which the best reason agrees' (*talis notitia, cui optima ratio constet*).⁷⁰ *Autopistis*, for Calvin, proved Scripture's divinity sufficiently, but not exhaustively, confirming Hooker's interpretation of his 'grave and learned' predecessor.⁷¹ Yet Calvin makes this concession while advocating the autopisticity which Hooker denies. It seems, therefore, that Hooker decouples that doctrine from the testimony of

68. 3.8.15; *FLE* 1.232:15-25. The question of how the testimony of the Spirit and the Church are related in attesting to the authority of Scripture is, as far as I can see, one on which Hooker is silent. The context for this quote, 3.8.14-15, makes this clear. In 3.14, Hooker rehearses the argument in 1.14.1 that Scripture does not attest to the scope of its own canon. Proceeding in 3.15 to the question of how we come to know this, he notes that the process often begins with Church testimony to scriptural authority. This conviction grows as study and reasoned apologetics to the divinity of Scripture corroborate the testimony of the Church, both before and after we believe. The quoted passage then shows the limitations of reason in supporting belief; unless it is inwardly confirmed by the testimony of the Spirit, rational argument remains 'uneffectual'. Thus, Hooker argues that reason complements both the external testimony of the Church and the internal testimony of the Spirit, but does not comment on how the testimony of Church and Spirit are related. Hooker's silence on this question is surely due to the exigency of his rhetorical situation: he had to defend, not Church testimony as such – the Puritans also made extensive use of it – but human reason against their distrust of it as a complement to the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit.

69. Calvin, 1.7.4, p. 60.

70. Calvin, 1.7.5, p. 61.

71. Pace Voak, *Richard Hooker*, p. 124.

the Spirit.⁷² In so doing, he departs as much from Reformed orthodoxy as in his denial of *autopistis*. At the same time, affirming the Spirit's internal testimony falls within the bounds of that orthodoxy, as Voak concedes.⁷³

Conclusion

Gibbs speaks of Hooker's doctrine of Scripture as a *via media* between Rome and 'Geneva' as well as between Rome and the Puritans.⁷⁴ The designation is viable regarding his doctrine of Scripture, more so than for other doctrines or for the macro-controversy about polity, with two significant qualifications. First, the middle way here is an artifact of Hooker's defense of the first sentence of Article 6 in its entirety, against unwritten traditions on the right and scriptural omnicompetence on the left. Second, outside of (presbyterian versus episcopal) polity proper, there is reason to doubt an equation between Puritan and Reformed views, notably Puritan suspicion of reason and natural law. Hooker's nuanced doctrine of Scripture therefore falls well short of classifying him as a *via media* theologian *tout court*.

The nuances cut the other way as well. Voak concludes that Hooker deviates from the Reformed doctrine of *sola scriptura* in two respects: (1) he denies Scripture is self-authenticating; (2) he departs from a Reformed understanding of the sufficiency of Scripture as per Article 6.⁷⁵ I have argued for (1) and against (2). While Hooker denies that Scripture can authenticate itself, his denial contradicts nothing Article 6 asserts or even assumes. If Hooker's disciplinarian opponents thought Hooker had defected from the article because he denied *autopistis*, why did *A Christian Letter* not interrogate him on that score? Hooker objected more to affirming autopisticity than his opponents did to his denying it. This curious situation, too, is demystified by Hooker's disavowal of both unwritten tradition and of inflated claims of omnicompetence in defining scriptural sufficiency. If the latter doctrine included *autopistis*, then Hooker may have felt constrained by logical

72. Atkinson, correctly discerning that Hooker believes in the Spirit's internal testimony to Scripture, comes close to conflating that testimony with scriptural autopisticity (*Richard Hooker*, pp. 93-94, n. 45, pp. 108-109). This conflation is dubious in view of Hooker's exclusions from scriptural self-attestation in *Lawes* 1.14 (see the section 'The Sufficiency of Scripture in *Lawes* 1.14').

73. Voak, *Richard Hooker*, p. 126.

74. 'Book I', p. 119; 'Richard Hooker's *Via Media* Doctrine', p. 234.

75. Voak, *Richard Hooker*, p. 130.

consistency to deny them both. Such a denial is congruent with his teleological and soteriological doctrine of Scripture. Nevertheless, Hooker regards rejecting *autopistis* as consistent with affirming its substance: that Scripture is supremely veridical because it reports God's own 'intuitive beholding'.