



Title: *Worship the LORD in the Beauty of Holiness: Richard Hooker's Defense of the English Church's Liturgy and Government*

Course: Anglicanism 202

Catechist: Dr. Adam Carrington

Mobile: 740-935-0332

Email: carringtonam@gmail.com

Term: Spring 2024

Introduction:

Revered by John Locke, William Blackstone, Sir Edmund Burke, John Keble, C.S. Lewis, and Russell Kirk, Richard Hooker is arguably the genius of Anglicanism as well as an architect of American political order. His stature among the founders of the Church of England rivals that of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. Although largely forgotten today, Hooker's *magnum opus*, the eight volume *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* is an apologia or defense of Anglicanism in the face of Puritan and Presbyterian critiques. In it, Hooker defines the Anglican way in its reverence for the authority of Holy Scripture, law, custom, and tradition.

Furthermore, from the founding of Jamestown in colonial Virginia through the establishment of the American republic, Hooker's doctrines about law, polity, and governance deeply influenced not only churchmen, but political theorists and jurists, as well. The British political philosopher, John Locke, cited "the judicious Hooker" at key points in his *Second Treatise of Civil Government*. Hooker mediated medieval Thomist moral and political philosophy to modern Anglo-American Protestants in a way that substantially formed their conception of American order.

But Hooker's *Laws* is chiefly significant for articulating the ideal of a society that coheres in and through Christian faith, a body politic which succeeds in not just having a church, but in being a Christian culture.

Today, amidst the waning of biblical-theological ideals and ethics in American society as well as in the church, it would behoove 21st century Anglicans in both the pew and pulpit to recover the thought of one of the most important founders of our faith tradition.

Of immediate concern is an identity crisis with Anglicanism. What markers define us as a distinct part of Christ's Church from Roman Catholics, Baptists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and others? On this question, Anglicans regularly debate on many particular matters of doctrine, practice, and worship.

Of course, debates over Anglicanism's definition are not new. For example, variations between local and Roman forms existed in the early Medieval English Church leading up to the Synod at Whitby (664). Last Fall, we took up one later line of dispute in our adult education class: why, starting in the 16th century, Anglicans are catholic but not Roman Catholic. We did so through studying Bishop John Jewel's *An Apology for the Church of England*, discussing the Protestant DNA of our church.

This Spring, we will consider another line of demarcation: what makes us distinct within the family of churches renewed by the Protestant Reformation. In the latter decades of the 16th century, England was solidly and stably Protestant as articulated in its formularies (Prayer Book, Ordinal, Homilies, Articles). Then, groups arose within the English church arguing for the need to further reform our church's doctrine and liturgy beyond those found in its formularies. These "Puritans" sought to move away from episcopal church government and to change elements of our worship to involve only as they believed Scripture positively demanded. As she did with Roman Catholic arguments, the Church of England largely rejected these calls. Instead, those reform movements would develop into Presbyterianism and various forms of Congregationalism.

But why did the Church of England reject the Puritans and like movements? This course will examine the most influential work stating why: Richard Hooker's *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. Richard Hooker (1554-1600) was a presbyter in the Church of England. In his youth, Hooker was taught by Bishop John Jewel (Hooker called Jewel, "worthiest divine that Christendom hath bred for some hundreds of years"). Hooker's *Laws* owes much to Jewel's instruction. We will read from a modernization of this work, one that includes its Preface through the end of Book 4. It lays out a view of Scripture, human reason, and government—both political and ecclesiastical—that would prove foundational for how the Church of England saw itself as a distinct Protestant body. Why aren't we Presbyterian or Baptist? Come and see how one of our most important divines defended our tradition. It remains a treasure of wisdom and insight for us today.

Course Text:

Richard Hooker, *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* in Modern English, Volume 1 (Davenant Institute, 2019).

Suggested Readings:

Nigel Atkinson, *Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture, Tradition, and Reason* (Regent, 1997).

W. Bradford Littlejohn, *Richard Hooker: a Companion to His Life and Work* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015).

Nigel Voak, *Richard Hooker and Reformed Theology* (Oxford University Press, 2003).

Reading Schedule:

1/21: Controversy Introduced and Rules of Engagement

Reading: Preface Chs. 1 (2-3), 5-7 (24-31), 9 (45-46)

1/28: The Different Types of Law

Readings: Book I Chs. 1-3 (48-58), 5 (62-63), 7 67-70

2/4: The Need and Use for Political Society

Reading: Book 1, Chs. 10 (82-91), 12 (99-101)

2/11: Scripture's Benefits and Purposes as Well as Adaptability of Biblical Commands

Reading: Book I, Chs. 13-16 (102-118)

2/18: Extent of Scriptural Authority

Reading: Book II, Chs. 1-6 (120-136)

2/25: Human Authority Under God's Word

Reading: Book 2, Chs. 7-8 (137-150)

3/3: The Church—Its Definition and Its Government

Reading: Book III, Chs. 1-4 (152-169)

3/10: Standard and Sources for Laws Within the Church, Part I

Reading: Book III, Chs. 5-8 (170-188)

3/17: Standard and Sources for Laws Within the Church, Part II

Reading: Book III, Chs. 9-10 (189-198)

3/24: No Class (Palm Sunday)

3/31: No Class (Easter Sunday)

4/7: Can Biblical Laws Be Changed?

Reading: Book III, Ch. 11 (199-216)

4/14: Liturgy's Importance and Objection that It is Roman Catholic, Part I

Reading: Book IV, Chs. 1-4 (218-231)

4/21: Liturgy's Importance and the Objection that It is Roman Catholic, Part II

Reading: Book IV, Chs. 5-9 (232-250)

4/21: Other Objections to the Liturgy: Judaizing and Idolatry

Reading: Book IV, Chs. 10-11 (251-266)

5/5: The Liturgy's Conformity to Other Reformed Churches and Concluding Defense

Reading: Book IV, Chs. 12-13 (267-281)