

**THE LIFE**  
**OF**  
**THOMAS HOOKER**

**BY EDWARD W. HOOKER**

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1870

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*What may be of most interest, are the excerpts from  
Hooker's writings, copiously gathered in Chapter 7.  
The heart of the man is best revealed there. – WHG*

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## Preface

THE preparation of this volume of the Series has been delayed, beyond the expectations of the author and of the Committee of Publication. This delay has arisen from the pressure of other duties, and from the difficulty of collecting materials. The latter has been of no ordinary magnitude. In the almost total absence of original papers of any kind, from Mr. Hooker's pen, the author has been compelled to rely principally upon matter, relative to him, which was incidental in Puritan and New England history, and scattered through many volumes in various libraries, and upon many thousands of pages. The reader will find in this volume, therefore, little of autobiography. The history of Mr. Hooker's life in Connecticut, especially, has been found merged in the civil and religious history of the State. The scantiness of original materials has been rendered a matter for special regret, from the belief that there have been in existence rich materials for a far fuller biography, had they been carefully preserved.

At the taking down of the old parsonage house of the First Congregational Church in Hartford, about thirty years ago, a large quantity of ancient papers was found, supposed to be those of Rev. Thomas Hooker; and they were thrown into Connecticut river by persons employed in the work, who were either ignorant or thoughtless of their value. If anything would justify a State enactment, making the careless or wanton destruction of ancient manuscript papers a felony, and punishable as such, the occurrence of such cases as this — which are frequent — would seem to do so. If, like many good and great men, Thomas Hooker was accustomed to record, in a journal form or otherwise, interesting incidents in his own life, his religious exercises, and results of his experience and observation as a Christian citizen and a minister, such records have been hopelessly put beyond the reach of any biographer.

With its many imperfections, from whatever cause, the present volume is commended to the lovers of the Puritan character and principles, in hope that it will be found not altogether without value, as a small contribution to the stock of Christian biography.

E. W. H

*May, 1849.*

## LIFE OF THOMAS HOOKER

### Chapter 1. Parentage and Education.

Parentage and ancestry. Contemporaries. Persecutions of the Puritans of his time. Education at Cambridge. Fellowship in Emmanuel College. Conversion, religious experience, and formation of character. Preaches at Chelmsford. Remarkable success and influence. Character of his eloquence as a preacher.

THE eminence and usefulness of a great and good man invariably lead us to inquire into his early history; his parentage, ancestry, and early education; and the providential circumstances which gave direction to his mind, and stamp to his character. We generally have the means of answering such inquiries; and are permitted to see what the individual was in his childhood, youth, and advancing manhood; how his character was formed, and by what instrumentalities developed. And while we see how men have been rendered useful, influential and estimable, we are instructed respecting the methods by which we are to labor for the formation of character in those whom we are to educate for the service of God and the good of the world.

There are cases, however, in which Divine Providence denies us the satisfaction of this description of knowledge. The early history of the individual is hidden from our view. No friend or admirer of his character has preserved the materials for his early biography; or if so, they remain as yet undiscovered, if not lost. We have therefore to begin with the man after he has grown up to his full intellectual and moral stature. We have no doubt he had an early education, and a course of training for his sphere of effort and usefulness. But we have to repress our curiosity on these points, and to rest satisfied that such a man lives and has become a blessing to the world; and be willing to leave the unknown years of his early life to be shown as among the secret things to be revealed in eternity.

The case of the excellent Thomas Hooker was like that which has now been described. Nothing has come down to us, in the histories of him and of his times, which even answers the question who his father and mother were. His birthplace was Marfield, Leicestershire, England. His birthdate was July 7, 1586. All that is known of him from that day till his entrance upon his collegiate course, is comprised in two sentences of the biographical sketch given by the author of *Magnalia Americana* (Cotton Mather).

“He was born of parents who were neither unable nor unwilling to bestow upon him a liberal education: from which the early lively sparkles of wit observed in him very much encouraged them. His natural temper was cheerful and courteous; but it was accompanied with such a sensible grandeur of mind, as caused his friends, without the help of astrology, to prognosticate that he was born to be considerable”

We commence our history of him, then, as a student in Emmanuel college, Cambridge; with his character mainly formed, and his preparations made for the life he was to lead, and for the work he was to do, as a man, a Christian, and a minister of Christ.

It would be matter of curiosity rather than of importance, to investigate the ancestry of Thomas Hooker, and to follow out the ramifications of lineage which would show the collateral relationships of his family. Perhaps we would find him related to Richard Hooker, the great apologist for English Episcopacy, and styled by king James, “the judicious” The existence of any relationship of consanguinity between these two men, however, is more than we have been able to discover. Moreover, it is of very little consequence in this sketch.

If, however, there *was* such relationship, it is a matter of interest to the student of coincidences and contrasts, that these two men, of the same family name, and contemporaries in England for several years, should have thought, reasoned, and written so utterly at variance with each other on the great subject of Ecclesiastical Polity. Richard Hooker wrote his great work which has given

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such strength and permanence to both English and American Episcopacy; and Thomas Hooker, on the other hand, was the author of another system of Church Polity, of an entirely different character from that of his illustrious namesake. And he appeared as a master-builder among the churches of New England, upon the broad and scriptural foundation of a most decided and energetic Congregationalism; and this is not only as distinguished from Episcopacy, but even from Presbyterianism. There were strong points of resemblance between the two men, in the essential elements of their characters, both as men and as Christians. At the same time, they were diametrically opposite in their Ecclesiastical views. We are thus shown that it is quite possible for two men, of the same nation, language, name, and perhaps lineage — both Protestants, and of essentially the same religious belief — to think, write and teach in wide difference from each other on ecclesiastical matters, and to lay the foundations of two separate Protestant religious denominations, never brought into union, and generally living in controversy with each other. And yet, neither of these two men are found “grievously possessed with a devil,” nor deserving to be shut out of the other’s charity as a Christian. If in generations past, it has run in the blood of the Hookers to construct systems of ecclesiastical government, it is very clear that — blood notwithstanding — one may be an inflexible Churchman, and the other an equally inflexible Congregationalist. So that, while the same kind of blood may run in their veins, and in the same direction, their processes of thinking on such a subject as ecclesiastical polity, may run in stubborn and absolute opposition to each other, and the results of their investigations and reasonings are as wide asunder as the east is from the west. Placed side by side, the two men form a study, for the moral painter, of no ordinary interest. The things to respect, admire and love in each, are many. Widely as they differed in their views of the government of the church, imperfect and agitated with divisions and conflicts on earth, they still had so many points of harmony on the great articles of the New Testament faith, and in their spirit, so many resemblances to that of the gospel of Jesus Christ, that we hope they have, together, seen ages of love, harmony, and bliss, as members of the Church perfect, peaceful, and glorified in heaven.

Thomas Hooker, as the contemporary of Cotton, Shepard, Norton, and others of their spirit, lived in England at a period when good men were sorely tried with wickedness in the high places of the Church, as well as of the State. He lived in the time of king James I, and of Archbishop Laud; and also of the Council Table, the Star Chamber, and the Court of High Commission — three tribunals of which Puritans lived day and night in fear. No man who loved his Bible and the religious liberty it teaches, was at any time sure that, by some mandate emanating from men in the interest of the ecclesiastical establishment, he would not on some pretext or other, be summoned before one of these courts, or before his bishop; and pass from there to Bridewell, or the Limbo; to Newgate, the Fleet, or the Compters; to the Clink, the Gate House, or the White Lion — for imprisonment at the pleasure of his persecutors, and probably for life.

It is necessary to say only this much in the present volume, about the “troubled times” in which Hooker lived, so that we may rightly estimate the circumstances in which his Christian and ministerial character was formed. And with this reference to the history of a period already before our readers in former volumes of this *Series of Lives*, we will confine this narrative principally to Hooker’s personal history and character, apart from any further views of the times in which he lived in England.

While most men who enter the Christian ministry, under the influence of divine grace, are found fitted for its duties generally considered, some appear to have been designed and prepared by Divine Providence, for peculiar and difficult departments of the ministerial work, and in which their great strength and special usefulness lie. One is particularly qualified to be a defender of the great articles of the Christian faith; another to be a learned and critical expositor of the word of God; a third to be a faithful and energetic promoter of the revival of religion and of the purification of the churches. One is a “son of thunder,” and another “a son of consolation” Each of these “has his proper gift from God; one after this manner, and another after that” Each fulfills a peculiar

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mission, as having a special relation to the kingdom of God, to be advanced in the hearts of believers. Mr. Hooker was one of those ministers who appears to have been designed for a particular service in the church. It was one which he faithfully and successfully fulfilled, both to Christians of his time, by his preaching and personal counsels; and to the generations of the church following, by his published works. The manner of his conversion, and the course of exercises through which he was carried by the Divine Spirit — before he became fully established in the enjoyment of the divine consolations — fitted him for the particular work of a “son of consolation” It is more worthy of notice in his case, as his were times when “the prince of this world” employed himself with unwonted and malignant diligence to “wear out the saints of the Most High,” by stirring up against all serious Christians who did not conform to the rites and ceremonies of the established church, the spirit of ecclesiastical opposition and persecution. And those who have had the most trying experience of this policy of the adversary, have had occasion to know, that when “the devil has come down having great wrath, knowing that he has but a short time,” his “fiery darts” are many, and the spiritual sufferings of the people of God through them, are often deep and distressing.

It appears that Mr. Hooker’s conversion took place while he was a Fellow of Emmanuel college; and that his mind, after having been matured by thorough educational discipline, was rendered the seat of spiritual sufferings which prostrated the scholar and the man of intellectual might, low at the foot of ‘the cross’ The history of this eventful period of his life, is thus given by one who had studied the ways in which God leads those whom he has appointed to important services.

“It pleased the Spirit of God very powerfully to break into the soul of this person, with such a sense of his being exposed to the just wrath of heaven, as filled him with most unusual degrees of horror and anguish, which broke not only his rest, but his heart also; and caused him to cry out, ‘While I suffer your terrors, O Lord, I am distraught’ (Psa 88:15) While he long had a soul harassed with such distresses, he had a singular help in the prudent and piteous carriage of Mr. Ash, who was a sizer<sup>1</sup> that then waited on him, and attended him with such discreet and proper compassion, that it later made him respect him highly, all his days. He afterwards gave this account of himself: ‘That in the time of his agonies he could reason himself to the rule,<sup>2</sup> and conclude that there was no way but submission to God and lying at the foot of his mercy in Christ Jesus, and waiting humbly there till he should please to persuade the soul of his favor; nevertheless, when he came to apply this rule to himself in his own condition, his reason would fail him, and he was able to do nothing’”

Let it not be said this was intellectual weakness, yielding to melancholy or enthusiastic feelings. Here was “the strong man,” bowing under a pressure which he could not sustain; the man of intellectual might, conscious in his inmost soul that he could not withstand “the Spirit of the Lord God,” convincing him of his sinfulness, both natural and practical; of his spiritual peril, as exposed to the penalties of the divine law, which is “holy, and just, and good” The awakened and convicted hearers of Peter on the day of Pentecost, the prostrated “Saul of Tarsus,” and the trembling jailer of Philippi, had all felt this way. In these spiritual exercises, Mr. Hooker experienced those distresses of the soul which always, in a greater or lesser degree, precede true conversion and a saving reconciliation with God.

“Having been thus troubled for a considerable time with such impressions of ‘the spirit of bondage’ that would fit him for the great services and enjoyments which God designed for him, at length he received “the spirit of adoption,” with a well-grounded persuasion of his interest in the new covenant”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Referring to a court of assize or inquiry; a *sizer* (or assizer) is a juror or officer of the court.

<sup>2</sup> “The rule” is exercising the spiritual disciplines (Bible-study, prayer, meditation) to pursue growth in holiness

<sup>3</sup> Magnalia, I. 303

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The transition from these deep distresses of soul to the “strong consolation” which is in Christ Jesus, must have made” the new man” to appear in very striking contrast with himself as he was in the days of his sorrows. This man, once so miserable, was so sweetly brought into the light and comfort of the gospel, that a record like the following could be made respecting him:

“It became his manner at lying down for sleep in the evening, to single out some certain promise of God, which he would repeat and ponder, and keep his heart close to it; until he found that satisfaction of soul with which he could say, ‘I will lay me down both in peace and sleep; for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety’ And he would afterwards counsel others to take the same course; telling them that ‘the promise was the boat which was to carry a perishing sinner over to the Lord Jesus Christ’”<sup>1</sup>

A point of great practical importance to Christians of a desponding habit, is presented here, and to which particular attention should be called. The tendency in some children of God, to look upon the dark and gloomy side of their own case, and to lay to heart in a discouraging way every rebuke of conscience and of precept, while at the same time they dare not take to themselves the consolations of a divine promise, needs to be corrected, we think, by fixing the mind upon some of the “exceeding great and precious promises” of the gospel. A determinate act of the Christian for this very purpose is many times needful. He must not wait till an almost miraculous enforcement of some divine promise is made upon his attention, while he is brooding over his sins and nourishing his sorrows, as though all the duties he had to do were here. Let him resolve, “I will seek unto God, and unto God will I commit my cause” Let him do this by looking into His good word for something which will show him a ground of hope, and open some spring of consolation. Let him think upon it and lay it to heart, as having as much right there as any precept of the gospel. And let him be thankful for this certainty, that God delights as much in that filial faith which grasps His promises with a firm hand, as he does in that obedience which conforms to His precepts. Let such a Christian continually remember this scripture: “Thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” That believer who is slain by the law, and broken in spirit for his sins, like Thomas Hooker, will habitually lie down at night meditating upon the promises of a faithful God and a mighty Savior. He will be able to rise each morning, saying, “And my sleep was sweet to me;” he will go on with a strength, alacrity, and cheerfulness in the performance of the daily duties of the Christian life, to which despondency and feeble faith would otherwise keep him very much a stranger.

This part of Mr. Hooker’s training for the ministry, was of an importance to him in his later life, not surpassed by all his attainments in human learning and theological science. It strengthened the intellectually strong man, and made him like Bunyan’s Great-Heart, an invaluable guide to Zion’s pilgrims, and a valiant defender of the feeble and trembling believers, against the “accuser of the brethren”

When a minister “does not neglect such a gift that is in him,” but cultivates it, and keeps it bright and ready for use, God will give him opportunities to use it. Mr. Hooker in the earliest years of his work as a minister and guide to souls, found much of this kind of work to perform.

“At first leaving the university, he sojourned in the house of Mr. Drake, a gentleman of great note, not far from London. His worthy consort being visited with such distresses of soul as Mr. Hooker himself had passed through, it proved an unspeakable advantage to both of them, that he had an opportunity to be serviceable. For indeed, he now had no superior, and scarcely any equal, for the skill of treating a troubled soul. When he left Mr. Drake’s family, he more publicly and frequently preached around London. In a little time, he became famous for his ministerial

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<sup>1</sup> Magnalia, I. 303

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abilities, but especially for his notable faculty at the wise and fit management of wounded spirits”<sup>1</sup>

This is a precious privilege of the sympathizing minister of Christ! — to be his Master’s agent in imparting to “those who mourn in Zion,” “the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness”

But there was still another qualification for the Christian ministry, kindred to this, which Mr. Hooker possessed in an eminent degree, and which has been described thus:

“He had a singular ability at giving answers to cases of conscience; happy was the experience of some thousands for this. For this work he usually set apart the second day of the week, in which he admitted all sorts of persons, in their discourses with him, to receive the benefit of the extraordinary experience which he had himself found of Satan’s devices. Once, Mr. Hooker was particularly addressed by a student in divinity who, upon entering his ministry, was horribly buffeted with temptations which were become almost intolerable. Reparing to Mr. Hooker, in the distresses and anguish of his mind, and bemoaning his own overwhelming fears. While the lion was thus roaring at him, Mr. Hooker answered, ‘I can compare with any man living, for fears. My advice to you is that you search out and analyze the humbling causes for them, and refer them to their proper places. Then go and pour them out before the Lord, and they will prove more profitable than any book you can read’”<sup>2</sup>

But in his dealing with troubled consciences, Mr. Hooker observed that there were a sort of crafty and guileful souls (which he would find out with admirable dexterity). And of these he would say, as Paul said of the Cretans, “Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” Sharp rebukes make sound Christians. For some, indeed, he “had compassion, making a difference;” and others he “saved with fear, pulling them out of the fire”<sup>3</sup>

This was a point of skill which could have come of no ordinary measure of Christian experience; nor could it come from a limited acquaintance with Christian people in the circumstances of spiritual perplexity, which often arise under temptations from without or from within. To guide such souls aright, according to the sure word of God — and also safely, for their establishment and peace — is among the most difficult and critical of the duties of the ministry. In reference to his preparation for such work, the minister needs to remember the words of his Master, “This kind does not go out but by prayer and fasting”

Mr. Hugh Peters, in a history of his Christian experience, addressed to his daughters, shortly before his death, attested the comfort he derived from the love and labors of Mr. Thomas Hooker”

And yet, this minister, who was so eminently “a son of consolation” to the afflicted children of God, was a perfect “son of thunder” when he had occasion to rebuke sin. The remark has been quaintly made of him, that “while doing his Master’s work, he would put a king in his pocket” The moral courage thus attributed to him, was illustrated on the occasion of a national fast, when the duty devolved upon him to preach at Chelmsford, before the judges then on their circuit. Their presence and that of a vast congregation, did not prevent his “declaring freely the sins of England, and the plagues that would come for such sins” And in his prayer, he besought the God of heaven to set on the heart of the king, what his own mouth had spoken in Malachi 2:11-12, quoting them distinctly in his prayer, as follows: “An abomination is committed; Judah has married the daughter of a strange god; the Lord will cut off the man that does this” It would seem that the consciences of the judges in whose presence he thus fearlessly preached and solemnly prayed,

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<sup>1</sup> Magnalia, I. 304

<sup>2</sup> Magnalia, I. 304

<sup>3</sup> Ibid



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were on his side; for they took no other notice of what he did, than to turn to the passages he had so quoted and applied.

It is highly probable that his fidelity in reproof at this time, was remembered against him at a subsequent period, when he was under the displeasure of the ecclesiastical authorities. It is certain, however, that if fearlessness of speech could afford a pretext for his being called to account by the enemies of truth and godliness, it *did* so. For he took no care to repress the impulses which he felt to perform his duty. And that which he did in the presence of the judges of the king's bench, he would doubtless have done in the presence of "the king's most excellent majesty" himself.

Mr. Hooker's education was such as the ancient and honorable university of Cambridge could give. The fact that he held a fellowship in his college, and was for a time in its board of instruction, affords presumptive evidence that his intellectual powers and his attainments in learning were held in high esteem in the university. Added to this, it appears that he preached the gospel to good acceptance, within the literary atmosphere of Cambridge, where no ordinary man could have sustained himself as a preacher.

In addition to his labors as an instructor and preacher, his influence was of value to the university in promoting the reformation of some existing abuses. Moreover, in his appropriate sphere, he was to exert an important influence on the Christian ministry. Emmanuel college was the residence of those designed for the sacred office. After leaving Cambridge, he occasionally preached at London for some time.<sup>1</sup>

His unimposing entrance upon the ministry has been described thus:

"He was not ambitious to exercise his ministry among the great ones of the world, from whom preferment might be expected; but in this, he imitated the example and character of our blessed Savior, of whom it is noted, according to the prophecy of Isaiah by him, 'The poor have the gospel preached to them.' He chose to be where great numbers of the poor could receive the gospel from him." <sup>2</sup>

The field of Mr. Hooker's principal labors as a preacher while residing in England, was Chelmsford, in Essex. His own strong inclinations were to reside in Colchester — that he might be near the Rev. Mr. Rogers of Dedham, and attend his lectures. For he seems to have had a very high esteem of Mr. Rogers as a preacher, and called him the prince of all the preachers of England. The great Lord and Master of ministers, however, had other designs respecting Mr. Hooker. He himself felt that it was "not in man who walks, to direct his steps;" He once said "that the providence of God often diverted him from employment in those places which he desired, and still directed him to those places which he had no thoughts of." The particular object for which he was invited to exercise his ministry in Chelmsford, was that he might be a lecturer, and an assistant of the Rev. Mr. Mitchell. In this intimacy and association with the minister of Chelmsford, was illustrated that excellency in the general character of Mr. Hooker, that he was of a truly fraternal spirit: living and laboring in that harmony of views and feelings with his brethren, which rendered both his and their labors happy, and testified to other men of the times, the excellent spirit of the Puritan ministry.

Mr. Hooker's ministry at Chelmsford continued for a period of four years. He enjoyed a popularity — in the best sense of the term — unsurpassed by that of any minister of his day. The attendance on his preaching was large. Among his hearers were noblemen, and others of high standing in English society. The influence of his ministry was powerfully and extensively felt throughout that

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<sup>1</sup> Mag. I, 804.

<sup>2</sup> Holmes' Hist. Camb., p. 89.

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country. The characteristics and impressions of his preaching have been thus stated by the author of *Magnalia Americana*:

“There was a rare mixture of pleasure and profit in his preaching. His hearers felt those penetrating impressions of his ministry upon their souls which caused them to reverence him as ‘a teacher sent from God.’ He had a most excellent faculty at the application of his doctrine. He would so touch the consciences of his auditors, that a judicious person would say of him that he was the best at a use that he ever heard.<sup>1</sup> Hereby a great reformation was wrought, not only in the town, but in the adjacent country: from all parts of which they came to hear the wisdom of the Lord Jesus Christ in his gospel, dispensed by this worthy man. When he first set up his lectures, there was more profaneness than devotion in the town. The multitude of inns and shops in the town, produced one particular disorder, of people filling the streets with unsuitable behavior after the public services of the Lord’s day were over. But the power of his ministry in public, and by the prudence of his carriage in private, he quickly cleared the streets of this disorder; and the Sabbath came to be very visibly sanctified among the people.”<sup>2</sup>

For the secret of success so remarkable, and of influence so powerful, upon a community so far from godliness, we must look into the study and the closet of this great and good man. His diligent studies, sanctified by prayer, and his prayers procuring the gift of the Holy Spirit to attend his labors, were doubtless the causes, unseen and unsuspected by the thoughtless world around him, of the public reformation.

Several incidents related about him and of some of his hearers, which occurred in the course of his ministry at Chelmsford and elsewhere in England, are worthy of note. They attest not only the talents and the influence of the man himself, but the presence and blessing of the Holy Spirit; and they illustrate this scripture: “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord.”

“A profane person designing in this only an ungodly diversion and merriment, said to his companions, ‘Come, let us go hear what that bawling Hooker will say to us.’ And thereupon, with an intention to make sport, they came to a Chelmsford lecture. The man had not been long in the church, before the ‘quick and powerful word of God,’ in the mouth of his faithful Hooker, pierced his soul. He came out with an awakened and distressed soul. By the further blessing of God on Mr. Hooker’s ministry, he came to a true conversion. For this cause, he would not afterward leave that blessed ministry, but went a thousand leagues to attend it and enjoy it.”<sup>3</sup>

“It was Mr. Hooker’s manner to visit his native county once a year. In one of those visits he had an invitation to preach in the great church of Leicester. One of the chief burgesses in the town was much opposed to his preaching there. And when he could not prevail to hinder it, he set certain fiddlers at work to disturb Mr. Hooker in the church porch, or churchyard. But such was the vivacity of Mr. Hooker, as to proceed in what he was about, without either damping his mind or drowning his voice; upon which, the man went to the church door to overhear what he said. It pleased God to so accompany some words uttered by Mr. Hooker, as to thereby procure first the *attention*, and then the *conviction* of that wretched man, coming to Mr. Hooker with a penitent confession of his wickedness; He became so penitent a convert as to be, at length, a sincere professor and practicer of the godliness of which he had been a persecutor.”<sup>4</sup>

The accounts given of the preaching of Mr. Hooker justify the belief that his eloquence was of a high order. It did not have the oratorical finish which is obtained by men seeking fame and popularity with the multitude, but that eloquence which is produced by the pervading influence

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<sup>1</sup> An allusion to the fashion of Puritan preachers of the day, to conclude their sermons with various exhortations.

<sup>2</sup> *Magnalia*, I. 304.

<sup>3</sup> Probably emigrated with, or followed Hooker, to New England.

<sup>4</sup> *Mag.* Book I. 807.

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of truth upon the soul, and an earnest desire to bring that truth into immediate contact with the mind, the conscience, the sensibilities of the hearer. The description has been applied to him, and doubtless with justice, which has been given of Bucholtzer: “Vivida in eo omnia fuerunt; vivida vox; vivida oculi; vivida manus; gestus omnes vivida.” <sup>1</sup> One who seems to have studied his character and manner as a preacher, with the taste of both a Christian and lover of sacred eloquence, says of him:

“He not only had that which Quintillian calls a *natural mobility of soul*, whereby the distinct images of things would come so nimbly and yet so fitly into his mind, that he could utter them with fluent expressions — as the old orators would usually ascribe to a special assistance from heaven, and counted that men spoke divinely in this. But the rise of this fluency in him was the divine relish which he had of the things spoken: the sacred panting of his holy soul after the glorious objects of the invisible world; and the true zeal of religion giving fire to his discourses”

“The vigor in the ministry of our Hooker, being raised by a coal from the altar of a most real devotion, touching his heart; it would be a wrong to the good Spirit of our God, if He were not acknowledged to be the Author of it. The Spirit accordingly gave a wonderful and unusual success to the ministry in which he breathed so remarkably.” <sup>2</sup>

Serious, experiential Christians love to sit under such a ministry as now described; and in later life they often refer to it as having been profitable to their spiritual interests. Thomas Shepard speaks with marked particularity, of the blessings he enjoyed at Chelmsford under the ministry of Mr. Weld and Mr. Hooker. <sup>3</sup>

It is delightful to see sacred eloquence thus traced to its true source. A blessed man is that minister whose power over men’s minds is thus derived. And blessed are the people who sit under such ministrations.

That such a preacher as Mr. Hooker should have been molested and hindered in his work by ecclesiastical authority, is to be accounted for by the fact that there have ever been those who, instead of being satisfied with the power committed to them as instructors and shepherds to the flock of Christ, have made themselves “lords over God’s heritage.” Moreover, the elevation of the standard of truth and holiness in a faithful ministry is always offensive to those whose dependence is on “the form of godliness,” while “denying the power thereof.” Furthermore, “the Prince of this world” has always shown a particular spite against ministers whose instructions clearly discriminate, and assist in discerning “between the one who serves God, and the one who does not;” (Mal 3.18) and which set in clear light the distinctions between the false doctrines of men who do not love the truth, and the doctrines of the uncorruptible word.

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<sup>1</sup> In him everything was lively; a lively voice, lively eyes, lively hands, lively every gesture.

Abraham Bucholtzer (1529-1584), Lutheran theologian. Quote taken from Adam, Melchior: Vitae Germanorum Theologorum, Frankfurt, 1615-1620, p. 556.

<sup>2</sup> Mag. Book III.

<sup>3</sup> Life of Shepard, p. 42.

## Chapter 2. Silenced for Non-Conformity.

Mr. Hooker silenced from preaching; for what, and by whom. Effect upon his spirit and character. Review of his preparation for this trial. His influence at Chelmsford upon the Conformist ministers and others. His belief in the articles of the church. Bond for appearance before the Court of High Commission. Departure for Holland, and narrow escape from the pursuivants.<sup>1</sup> Residence and ministry in Holland. Views of the religious state of Holland. Progress of the Puritan emigration from England to America; and objects of it. Returns from Holland to England, and great danger of arrest. Sails for New England. Farewell sermon. Effect of Hooker's and Cotton's move, upon Shepard and others.

IN the year 1630, a spiritual court which held its sessions in Chelmsford, the place of Mr. Hooker's residence, put an end to his preaching there. He had spent four years in the earnest endeavor to fulfill his ministry, in the "answer of a good conscience before God;" at the same time he declined conformity to what he deemed superstitious and useless externals, required of the ministry of the Established Church. He was not a man to be persuaded by rhetoric, or frightened by menace, or compelled by bonds and imprisonment, to encumber his ministrations in the word, ordinances, and prayer, with the paraphernalia of Popery — whether enjoined from the Vatican at Rome, or from the palace of "his grace the Archbishop of Canterbury." The simplicity of the gospel and of that form of service which regards God as "a Spirit" to be worshiped "in spirit and in truth," was not in his judgment to be marred by association with the display of surplices, caps, copes, cassocks, and other like matters of sanctimonious foppery, to which many attached as much importance. And more than this, he was one of the last men to feel any complacency in Popery, whether under the garb of Protestant Episcopacy, or openly appearing as "The Beast." His influence also upon other ministers was exerted without disguise or fear of consequences, to encourage and embolden them to take the position of unflinching resistance to all ecclesiastical impositions in matters which would directly or indirectly acknowledge the Romish religion.

Here, however, let it be observed that Mr. Hooker was not a dissenter from "the doctrine of Faith of the Church of England." He simply wished for his brethren and himself, the liberty to act according to the dictates of conscience, in regard to things that in themselves are indifferent. And it appears, after he had been compelled to take refuge by flight to New England, he declared here, and the declaration was sent over to England to be published there: "I do not speak against the doctrine of faith of the Church of England; for we are to bless God, who has given the king a heart to maintain it." <sup>2</sup> And it is to her disgrace that by the most relentless intolerance she drove out, as a fugitive for life, one of her ministers so true to her creed, and so willing to serve her in the use of the eminent talents God had given him.

Under circumstances so trying as those of interdiction from preaching a gospel which he loved, and which was the ground of all hope for salvation; and having the elements of character so united in him, Mr. Hooker was a man to think intensely; feel deeply; inquire for duty conscientiously; realize the dangers of the times, and to anticipate anxiously the scenes before him. Such a man, thus situated, was also one to pray fervently for light, direction, help, safety; to task his own patience, prudence, judgment, intellect, to the utmost, in making his way to conclusions on duty, which should be so sound as to need no revision. Having done all these things, he was also the man to form purposes, high and momentous to himself, and to those with whom he was to sympathize and act; and to carry out those purposes with the decision and moral courage becoming a man, a Christian, and a Christian minister.

For this day of trial, Mr. Hooker had been in the process of both intellectual and spiritual training, while in his retirement at Emmanuel college, and subsequently in his active ministry both at Chelmsford and in Holland. Doubtless he had also attentively studied the book of Providence,

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<sup>1</sup> *Pursuivants*: servants who pursue; the king's messenger or arresting officer, who executes warrants.

<sup>2</sup> See his "Soul's Effectual Calling to Christ," p.447.

## Chapter 2. Silenced for Non-Conformity.

which in those trying times, was opening its pages to the eyes of the good men of England, from day to day. He had also studied human nature, in the Church and in the State; as it exhibited itself in the king upon his throne, in the nobles in their halls, in the archbishops and bishops in their palaces, in their robes and on their high seats, in the judges upon the bench, and more than all, in the members of the Council Table, the Star Chamber, and the Court of High Commissions, occupying seats of influence and power, and carrying out their designs against all good Puritans, in the union of those two fearful instrumentalities — espionage and despotism.

Occupied with such subjects of study thus forced upon his attention, Mr. Hooker had been in a course of preparation for “the things which might befall him” in the field of public duty and action. He had come to the eventful period when his opinions and principles respecting civil and religious rights brought him into collision with the lords, both spiritual and judicial. It would be deeply interesting, if we could get possession of some newly discovered manuscript from Mr. Hooker’s pen, written between the years of his residence at Cambridge, and his flight to New England; and which could give us the records of his thoughts and the workings of his mind while he looked upon the hostile aspect of the Church and the State, before him. It would also be instructive, if we could learn from the pages of such a diary, how he contemplated his duties to his king, his church, and his country, in connection with his duty to God, and how he sought relief at the throne of grace, from the solicitude and fear which must have agitated him. We should, doubtless, see how and where a good man finds support when” his foes are the men of his own household.” (Mat 10.36)

Men like Mr. Hooker live in such scenes, and have such questions of duty to weigh. Their decisions involve not only their own, but the interests, spiritual and temporal, of generations yet unborn; especially considering that they have these decisions to make with reference to the final approval of conscience and of God, in the last judgment. They must pass through agitations and conflicts, through alternations of hope and fear, of confidence and of trembling, which can be rightly estimated only by Him who “sees in secret,” and who knows the heart of his people when they suffer “for righteousness sake.”

Mr. Hooker’s residence seems to have continued near Chelmsford for some time after he was silenced. He employed himself meanwhile in teaching a school at Little Braddow, having John Eliot, afterwards “the apostle of the Indians,” in his family as an usher. By his instructions to the youth, during that period, he was instrumental in bringing forward several good ministers in subsequent years.

John Eliot, speaking of his residence with Mr. Hooker, says, “I was called to this place through the infinite riches of God’s mercy in Christ Jesus to my poor soul; for here the Lord said to my dead soul, live; and through the grace of Christ I do live, and I shall live forever. When I came to this blessed family, I then saw and never before, the power of godliness, in its lively vigor, and efficacy.”<sup>1</sup>

This testimony says much; but it awakens the earnest wish that more could be known of the habits of family religion, which had a place in Mr. Hooker’s house. To know how such a man was accustomed to manage his religious intercourse with his family — to have descriptions of the morning and evening devotions; of the Sabbath occupations; of the habits of conversation in which he promoted the spiritual good of his own family, and those who resided with him — would not merely gratify pious curiosity, but would doubtless do much to stimulate Christian fidelity.

And yet, this man, at the time to which Mr. Eliot alludes, was under the interdict of the Bishop of London not to preach “the gospel of Christ.” It was not for any offence against the laws of Christ; not for defection from the truth; not for having in any way forfeited the character of “a good minister of Jesus Christ;” but for declining conformity to the injunction of the Established Church

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<sup>1</sup> Mag, vol. I. p. 305. Life of Eliot, p. 47.

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upon its ministers, that they “*keep the unity of apparel,*” being “*canonically habited with a square cap, a scholar’s gown (priestlike), a tippet, and in the Church, a linen surplice.*”<sup>1</sup>

It availed him nothing that he could declare the doctrinal belief of the English Church to be his own. What was required of him was a conformity to the outward and Popish “gear” of the Church; irrespective of any fidelity there might be in him to the *faith* of the church.

The sentence silencing Mr. Hooker was deeply regretted even by many ministers of the Established Church. Forty-seven of them presented a petition to the Bishop of London, on his behalf. In it they certified that “they knew Mr. Hooker to be orthodox in his doctrine, honest in his life and conversation, peaceable in his disposition, and in no way turbulent or factious.” This testimony, though coming from churchmen and clergymen, and touching every point on which reasonable men in the higher offices of the church should insist, availed nothing. The bishop’s seal was upon Mr. Hooker’s lips, and he was compelled to be silent as to the public duties of the ministry.

It was impossible, however, for him to refrain from all efforts to do good, and to exert the influence of a lover of truth and godliness, around him. It is related that he engaged the various ministers in the vicinity of Chelmsford, to establish a monthly meeting for fasting, prayer, and religious conference. By his influence, several pious young ministers were settled in the neighborhood, and others became more established in the fundamental doctrines of the gospel.”<sup>2</sup>

To the injunction of the spiritual court against Mr. Hooker’s preaching the gospel, was added a bond, in the sum of £50, to appear before the Court of High Commission. By the advice of his friends, he forfeited his bond, rather than expose himself to the hazards of appearing before a court so notoriously despotic, and relentless; and from which he would doubtless have passed to prison for years, if not for his whole life. One of his hearers, who was his surety, paid the bond; and was reimbursed by several good people in the vicinity of Chelmsford. After a short residence in retirement, kindly and courteously provided for him by his friend, the Earl of Warwick, he left the country for Holland.<sup>3</sup>

The spirit of persecution, however, which had taken away his office, and imposed an unrighteous and heavy bond, was too intolerant even to allow him to leave the country in peace. Down to the moment of his embarkation, his steps were watched by the pursuivants of that church which should have loved and protected him. He barely escaped their hands at the time of his sailing for Amsterdam. His passage was a perilous one. But he who commanded the wind and the waves, and who had yet a great work for him to do, for the cause of truth and godliness, brought him safe to his destined port.

Mr. Hooker seems to have been a man of strong faith, even in times of danger, whether the danger was from the machinations of wicked men, or from the raging of the elements. At his departure for Holland, leaving his friends and flying before the pursuivants who were in quest of him, one of them said, “Sir, what if the wind should not be fair, when you come to the vessel?” He simply replied, “Brother let us leave that with Him who keeps the wind in the hollow of his hand.” And it is remarkable that the wind changed from a contrary to a favorable direction, as soon as he had arrived on board the ship. When on its passage, the ship ran upon a shelf of sand in the night, and they were in danger of shipwreck, Mr. Hooker — with a confidence not unlike that of Paul on his

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<sup>1</sup> Neal’s Hist. Puritans, I., 98. Harper’s Edit, 1843.

<sup>2</sup> Brooke’s *Lives of the Puritans*, III, 65.

<sup>3</sup> The fact appears in the life of Rev. Henry Whitfield, that though himself a conformist for twenty years, “yet a pious non-conformist was all this time very dear to him, and such persecuted servants of Christ, as Mr. Cotton, Mr. Hooker, Mr. Goodwin, and Mr. Page, then molested for their non-conformity, were sheltered under his roof.” It does not appear at what time Mr. Hooker was thus hospitably entertained and protected by Mr. Whitfield, though it doubtless was the fact that in his numerous flights from the pursuivants of the church, he at some time took refuge in his house.

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voyage to Rome — assured his fellow voyagers that they would be preserved; and he was not disappointed.

Mr. Hooker's residence in Holland was of three years' continuance. His first labors in the ministry in that country, were as an assistant to Mr. Paget at Amsterdam. The term of his ministerial services there was short, however. Mr. Paget exerted his influence in the Classis,<sup>1</sup> against Mr. Hooker. It was on the ground that he was suspected of favoring the Brownists, a sect who denied that the Church of England was a true church, and that her ministers were rightly ordained.<sup>2</sup>

However, no explanations of his views on the subject, ever given by Mr. Hooker — nor any exculpations of himself from that charge — satisfied Mr. Paget. It appears, moreover, that Mr. Paget regarded with like jealousy Mr. Davenport, Mr. Ames, Mr. Forbes, and others. Mr. Hooker was not the man to desire association with a minister whose prejudices were so invincible as those of Mr. Paget; nor to preach to a congregation who sympathized so strongly in the jealousies of their pastor. He therefore quietly withdrew. He moved to Delft, and became associated with the Rev. Mr. Forbes, an aged and excellent Scotch minister. Mr. Forbes "esteemed him highly, in love, for his works' sake;" and the harmony in which they lived as co-laborers, was both to their own honor as Christian ministers, and to the comfort of the people. The congregation to which they preached was composed principally of English merchants, established at Delft. Mr. Hooker continued with Mr. Forbes for two years. And then, upon a call to Rotterdam to assist the Rev. Dr. William Ames, who had fled to Holland from the persecutions of Bishop Bancroft, he moved to that place. In addition to his labors in preaching, he assisted Dr. Ames in the preparation of his book entitled, "A Fresh Suit against Human Ceremonies in God's Worship." The esteem in which he was held by Dr. Ames was such as to lead the latter to say, "notwithstanding his acquaintance with many scholars of different nations, he had never met with a man equal to Mr. Hooker, as a preacher or as a learned disputant."

Mr. Hooker's experience of the trials attendant on his ministry in England, had fitted him to be a sagacious and safe counselor upon all questions which concerned the instituted worship of God. His worth, in this respect, was highly appreciated by the learned and venerable Ames. The regards of Dr. Ames were fully reciprocated by Mr. Hooker, in the estimate which he formed and expressed respecting his works — especially his "Medulla Sacrae Theologiae" (Marrow of Sacred Theology), and his "Casus Conscientiae" (Cases of Conscience) which Mr. Hooker regarded as being of a character so elementary in matters of religious faith and practice, that joined with the thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, they were almost sufficient, without the aid of any other theological works, to be the sole text books for theological study.

Although Mr. Hooker found many things in Holland pleasant to him, as a minister of the gospel — especially the liberty enjoyed there, to "preach the unsearchable riches of Christ" — he still felt that he could not invite his friends in England, who were suffering under ecclesiastical restriction and oppression, to come there with the purpose of establishing themselves. The state of religion in the churches in Holland, moreover, appears to have discouraged the idea of making it his own permanent residence, or advising any of his English friends to do so. And "God having provided some better thing" for both him and them — and reserving them as a seed with which to plant the gospel in the new western world — he was kept in the frame of mind indicated in that text of Scripture, "Arise and depart, for this is not your rest."

His feelings, at this time, are best indicated in a letter which he wrote from Rotterdam, to Mr. John Cotton, apparently in a time of sickness and considerable perplexity.

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<sup>1</sup> *Classis*: the governing body of pastors and elders in certain churches.

<sup>2</sup> Neal, I, 149. The Brownists were English Dissenters who separated from the Church of England. Most aboard the Mayflower in 1620 were Brownists. In fact, for 200 years, the Pilgrims were known as *the Brownist Emigration*.

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“The state of these provinces, to my weak eye, seems wonderfully ticklish and miserable. For the better part — heart religion — they content themselves with bare forms, even though much blemished. But for all I can see or hear, they do not know ‘the power of godliness.’ And if it were thoroughly pressed, I fear it would be fiercely opposed.

“My ague <sup>1</sup> still holds me. The ways of God’s Providence, in which he has walked towards me in this long time of my sickness, and in which I have drawn out many wearied hours under his Almighty hand (blessed be his name), together with pursuits <sup>2</sup> and banishments — which have awaited me as one wave follows another — have driven me to an amazement: his paths being too secret and’ past finding out’ by such an ignorant, worthless worm as myself. I have looked over my heart and life, according to my measure, aimed and guessed as well as I could; and entreated His Majesty to make known his mind, in which I missed; and yet I think I cannot spell out readily the purpose of his proceedings. All of which, I confess, have been astonishing in miseries, and more than astonishing in mercies to me and mine”

In this letter there is a singular blending of the sorrows of a tender spirit, with the strong confidence of a son of adoption, in his heavenly Father. And his concluding testimony to the divine mercies, as so greatly overbalancing all his afflictions, is most touching; and it effectually rebukes that spirit of despondency and complaining which, even in the Christian, sometimes exclaims, “All these things are against me.”

While Mr. Hooker was in Holland, the emigration of the oppressed and persecuted Puritans was rapidly going forward, from England to New England. Among them were many of his friends who had resided in the county of Essex. The hearts which were sighing for the liberty which the Lord Jesus Christ has designed for his people, and in all ages has taught them to love, were in the condition indicated by the prophet when he said, “Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place;” and by the mourning David, when he said, “Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest. Lo, then I would wander far off and remain in the wilderness.”

The objects contemplated by Mr. Hooker’s friends in moving to New England — in accordance with those of the multitudes of other devoted men and women who were making their way here every year — were “opportunity to enjoy and practice the pure worship of the Lord Jesus Christ, in churches gathered according to his direction.” Those who wished to move to New England for such purposes, and who had known Mr. Hooker during the period of his ministry in Essex, very naturally directed their eyes to him as their minister, to emigrate with them, and to renew among them the work of instruction through which they had been so richly profited in the earlier years of his ministry. In the state of depression, perplexity, and darkness as to the future, which we have seen described in his letter to Mr. Cotton, the invitation which his Essex friends gave him to accompany them to New England, must have been to his heart, in sweet fulfillment of that text of Scripture, “Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness.” It showed him a way out of his troubles — plain, direct, immediate — and which could not be mistaken. With gratitude and holy confidence, he took the path thus opened. The sequel will show how on that path he found consolation, relief, joy, and prosperous usefulness as a minister of Christ.

However, his first steps from Holland to New England, were to be taken amidst dangers at the hands of his persecutors in his native country. It appeared necessary to go to England on his way to New England. Therefore, when he once more set his face towards his native land, he could say, as Paul did when going up to Jerusalem, “not knowing the things which shall befall me there;” and he might have added, “bonds and imprisonment await me.” The pursuivants of the church, as already stated, had followed him when he left England for Holland, to the very moment of his sailing; so that he but just escaped their hands. He knew that if, on his return, they did not meet

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<sup>1</sup> *Ague*: a fever with fits of chills and shivering.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, Persecutions in his native land.



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him on the same spot from which he had sailed three years before, and shut him up in prison with the hundreds and thousands of others who were suffering “persecution for righteousness sake,” it would be because his omnipresent Lord was watching over him, and holding him by his right hand.

The pursuivants were on his track again, shortly after his arrival in England. And he found himself — even in the land of his fathers — hunted “like a partridge upon the mountains.” They traced him to the house of his friend, Rev. Samuel Stone, who was to be his associate in emigrating to New England. Mather’s graphic account of the scene, and of Mr. Hooker’s escape at that critical moment, will best tell the story.<sup>1</sup> When the pursuivants knocked at the door of the very chamber in which Mr. Hooker was in conversation, “Mr. Stone was at that instant smoking tobacco; for which Mr. Hooker had been reproving him, as being then used by few persons of sobriety. Being also of a sudden and pleasant wit, he (Mr. Stone) stepped to the door, with his pipe in his mouth, and with such an air of speech and look as to give him some credit with the officer. The officer demanded whether Mr. Hooker was there? Mr. Stone replied, with a braving sort of confidence, ‘What Hooker? Do you mean Hooker that lived once at Chelmsford?’ The officer answered, ‘Yes, he!’ Mr. Stone, with a diversion like that which once helped Athanasius, gave this true answer: “If it is he you look for, I saw him about an hour ago, at such a house in the town. You had best hasten there after him.’ The officer took this for a sufficient account, and went his way.”

This incident plainly showed to Mr. Hooker that “Satan desired to have him;” and that he must look well to his steps if he hoped ever to see New England. He therefore studied concealment during the rest of his brief sojourn in England.

The precise length of time which he spent in his native land after his return from Holland, does not appear; nor is the manner in which he occupied himself known, nor even the place where he resided. He took his departure from the Downs about the middle of July, in 1633, in the ship *Griffin*.<sup>2</sup> Among his fellow passengers were his choice friends, Mr. Cotton and Mr. Stone. And such was the danger of being pursued and arrested, that Mr. Hooker and Mr. Cotton were under the necessity of continuing incognito till the ship was well out upon the main ocean. Till then they could not even take their turns in the public worship daily held aboard ship. The religious services were at first, therefore, conducted by Mr. Stone, the only one who was known to the ship’s company as a preacher.

The feelings with which Mr. Hooker left England seem to have been somewhat like those of the prophet Jeremiah, when hated and threatened by his countrymen. It appears that he preached, somewhere, a “farewell sermon” to England. It is uncertain whether it was while enjoying the safety of his ship on her way across the Atlantic, or after his arrival in New England. His mind was in an unusual state of elevation. He uttered himself in strains both touching and prophetic, as we learn from some imperfect and (as one writer remarks) “injurious” notes which were published. The extracts which follow are all that will be here given:

“It is not gold and prosperity which makes God our God. There is more gold in the West Indies than there is in all Christendom; but it is God’s ordinances, in the virtue of them, that show the presence of God.”

“Is England not ripe? Is she not weary of God? No, she is fed for the slaughter.”

“England has seen her best days, and now evil days are befalling us.”

“And you, England, which has been lifted up to heaven with means, shall be abased and brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in you, had been done in India or Turkey, they would have repented before this.”

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<sup>1</sup> *Magnalia* I, 309.

<sup>2</sup> Savage’s *Winthrop*, I, 108.

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It does not appear to have been in the spirit of denunciation, that Mr. Hooker thus expressed himself; but of apprehension of her coming woes, as under the chastisement of him who “threshes the nations in anger” for their sins. To suppose that this good man cherished any other feelings in what he uttered, would do him great injustice, by ascribing to him a state of mind altogether inconsistent with his character and habits of speech and of spirit, during all the years of his life, as an Englishman and a Christian. Some utterances have been imputed to him, which are too questionable to admit the belief that he ever used them. A sermon on “The Danger of Desertion,” said to be his, and given in a recent work on Congregational history, bears some marks of authenticity; but also many marks of having been taken and published by an unfriendly or an unskillful stenographer.<sup>1</sup> It does not compare well in matter, style, or spirit, with his published writings. And while it is quite possible that Mr. Hooker did preach a sermon in some respects like this, we would do him an injustice to call this his veritable farewell sermon.

That his solicitude respecting the land of his fathers was deep and abiding, appears, however, from expressions which fell from his lips, several years after his move to this country. He evidently had studied the rebukes which the Scriptures address to nations on account of their sins, “trembling at the words of the God of Israel,” and fearing both the provocation of divine judgments, and their infliction upon his native land.

It is interesting to observe how Mr. Hooker and his brethren and the good people sailing with them, after they were safely on their way, enjoyed and used their religious liberty during their voyage. They literally preached and prayed during the whole time of their flight from England to New England. There was a sermon preached every day while they were on board, by one or another of these three divines. Indeed, they had three sermons, or expositions, for the most part, every day: from Mr. Cotton in the morning, Mr. Hooker in the afternoon, Mr. Stone after supper in the evening.<sup>2</sup> Their Father and their God seemed to be saying to them, as a portion of his Zion in their little bark on the wide ocean, “Here I will dwell. I will satisfy her poor with bread; I will also clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints will shout aloud for joy.”

The move of Mr. Hooker from England was felt by good men who remained there, as an afflictive providence. Thomas Shepard, in giving the reasons for his own subsequent move to New England, assigns this as his third: “I saw the Lord departed from England, when Mr. Hooker and Mr. Cotton were gone; and I saw the hearts of most of the godly set and bent that way, and I thought I would feel many miseries if I stayed behind.”<sup>3</sup> There was perhaps too much of despondency in this observation of Mr. Shepard; but it was a testimony, both fraternal and honorable, of the esteem and reverence in which he held Mr. Hooker and Mr. Cotton.

Dr. Ames had intended following Mr. Hooker soon after his move from Rotterdam. But death removed him to “a better country, even a heavenly one.” His widow and children afterwards came to New England, and experienced the kind offices of Mr. Hooker, as their patron and friend in a new country.<sup>4</sup>

It should here be stated that “Mr. Hooker’s company,” so called, which afterwards constituted his church at Cambridge, had preceded him.<sup>5</sup> Their names are preserved among the records of the proprietors of Cambridge.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hanbury’s Historical Memorials, vol. I, p. 492 and C.

<sup>2</sup> Magnalia, Book III.

<sup>3</sup> Life of Shepard.

<sup>4</sup> Holmes’ Hist., Camb., p. 40 in Mass. Hist. Col, vol. VII.

<sup>5</sup> Savage’s Life of Winthrop, I, 88, note.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix A of this volume.

### Chapter 3. Arrival in New England.

Mr. Hooker's arrival at Boston. Welcome by friends preceding him. Character of the Puritan Christians then gathered in New England. Preparation for his new residence and sphere of influence. Settlement at Cambridge, and labors as a Minister. Discussion with Roger Williams. Epistle respecting the Cross in the Banners. Estimate in which he was held by the General Court of Massachusetts Bay. Various public labors.

MR. HOOKER and his associates arrived at Boston, on September 4th, 1633, after a voyage of six weeks.

The author of the "Wonder-working Providence of Zion's Savior in New England," in his notices of events in that year, gives this record:

"Behold the sea also bringing in whole shiploads of mercies, more being filled with fresh forces for furthering this wonderful work of Christ, and indeed this year many precious ones came in, whom Christ in his grace has made much use of in these his churches, and commonwealth, insomuch that these people were almost over-balanced with the great income of their present possessed mercies. Yet they address themselves to the seashore, where they courteously welcome the famous servant of Christ, grave, godly, and judicious Hooker, and the honored servant of Christ, Mr. John Haynes, as also, the Reverend and much desired Mr. John Cotton, and the rhetorical Mr. Stone, with diverse others of the sincere servants of Christ, coming with their young, and with their old, and with their whole substance, to do Him service in this Desert wilderness. Thus this poor people have tasted liberally of the salvation of the Lord in every way; they deem it high time to take up the cup of thankfulness, and pay their vow to the most high God, by whom they were helped to this purpose of heart, and accordingly set apart the 16th day of October (which they call the eighth Month, not out of any humor of singularity, as some are ready to censor them with, but of purpose to prevent the Heathenish and Popish observation of Days, Months, and Years, that they may be forgotten among the people of the Lord). This day was solemnly kept by all the seven churches, rejoicing in the Lord, and rendering thanks for all their benefits"<sup>1</sup>

To Mr. Hooker, this was an arrival among friends, most grateful to his heart as a Christian minister and a man of strong attachments.

We who live at this day of religious freedom can scarcely realize what intense joy he and other Puritan ministers and private Christians felt, in view of the contrast between their condition at the moment they landed in New England and that in which they had spent so many dark and anxious years in England. Here was the "liberty of the sons of God," so far as it can be experienced on this side heaven. To Mr. Hooker himself, who for three years had been an exile from his country — and when he at last ventured to return, was obliged to look carefully lest he fall into the hands of the pursuivants of the English church, and be lodged in a prison — the contrast must have been peculiarly delightful.

It is now our pleasure to contemplate this good man in the new scenes and circumstances in which he was to act. He is three thousand miles from the palace of his persecutor, Bishop Laud, and with "none to molest or make him afraid." He is surrounded by friends, some of whom came with him, and others who came before him. Besides his fellow voyagers, Cotton, Stone and Haynes, there were Winthrop, Wilson, Eliot, and others like them in goodly number, who had preceded him. Each one of them, all the men of Succoth said of the brethren of the valiant Gideon, "resembled the children of a king." (Jdg 8.18) And of those who, with these men for their leaders, had been congregating in New England for several years, it might be said, as of Israel when they came up out of Egypt, "there was not one feeble person among their tribes." As a body of men, the Puritan

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<sup>1</sup> Mass. Hist. Col., xiii, pp. 134, 135. [Author: Captain Edward Johnson, 1654].

### Chapter 3. Arrival in New England.

settlers in Massachusetts Bay at that time, present to the student of history such a spectacle as had never before been seen since apostolic times. The annals of nations will not soon tell of an equal number of men having among them more sterling worth or weight of character, nor men better qualified than they to lay the foundations of a free state and of free churches. They came destined by Divine Providence to people a land where the experiment of a people governing themselves by laws of their own making, and by public servants of their own choice, and worshiping God according to the dictates of their own consciences, should be tried on an extensive scale. And when we have said these things of the New England forefathers, we have spoken of character, to the moral excellence and aggregate of which, Thomas Hooker made a contribution in his own person, not surpassed by any other man whose name is found in the catalogue of the Pilgrims.<sup>1</sup>

We have already seen that Mr. Hooker was well trained, intellectually, morally, and spiritually, and had learned, amidst the agitations of his country, what constitutes a State,” and what a Church; what may be the disorders and the dangers of both; and by contrast, what are the principles and forms of government best adapted to secure the ends for which they are created. He was now prepared to lend his aid in founding and constructing the institutions of a country which heaven had decreed should be free. We see him on New England ground, ready for the service of Christ and the church,” and also ready to do all that might properly be done by a Christian minister to promote the civil as well as religious interests of the country. He was welcomed in a manner which must have been most grateful to his feelings, and by numbers who had known and appreciated his ministry in the fatherland. And it was certain that in him, the New England colonies had an accession of no common value to their welfare, both temporal and spiritual.

At a fast, observed by the church at Newtown, afterwards called Cambridge, October 11, 1633, Mr. Hooker was chosen pastor and Mr. Stone teacher. This church was the eighth gathered in the colony of Massachusetts Bay,<sup>2</sup> and this was their first choice of ministers. Mr. Hooker received ordination again, at the hands of his brethren, on his entrance upon office at Cambridge, although he had received ordination by a bishop as a presbyter in England.<sup>3</sup> Thus within the short space of five weeks after his arrival in New England, he became the pastor of a Congregational church, and entered upon the work he so much loved among a people who were prepared to “rejoice in his light.”

It mattered little to men of the spirit of Hooker, Cotton, and others of their associates, that after their departure Heylyn and other wits followed them with their “ungodly ribaldry,” calling them “the bellwethers” of the flocks, which had gone to New England, and making them and their religion the subjects of their ballads; for the diversion of the thoughtless and profane.<sup>4</sup> That all sorts of weapons should have been brought into service by the enemies of Puritanism, was to be expected. And when persecution had driven them across the Atlantic, there was of course leisure for ballad-mongers to employ their powers at the expense of good men, of whom the authorities of the establishment had succeeded in ridding the country. — “Behold their sitting down and their rising up: I am their music,” said the author of Lamentations (Lam 3.63) “And now I am their song, yes I am their byword,” said Job of those who reproached him (Job 30.9) “And I was the song of the drunkards,” said the devout King of Israel (Psa 69.12). It was, however, immeasurably less a reproach to Bishop Laud’s exiles that they should be thus celebrated, than it was to that

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hooker was “admitted a freeman,” May 14, 1634, at the same time as Gov. Haynes, Cotton, Mayhew, and Stone — Savage’s *Winthrop*, II, 152, note.

<sup>2</sup> Mass. Hist. Col. XV, 136.

<sup>3</sup> Mass. Hist. Col., VII, 39.

<sup>4</sup> See Hanbury, II, 40, 11.

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church in whose service, for Christ's sake, they had been willing to spend their lives, that she should have had such helpers in "casting out their names as evil."

It is here in place to notice the reasons assigned by Mr. Cotton for his own and Mr. Hooker's move to New England, as given in a letter by Mr. Cotton, apparently to some brother yet remaining in England. The letter bears the date, *Boston, December 3, 1634*, more than a year after their arrival in this country. The following extract will be sufficient for the purpose.

"The questions you demand, I would rather answer by word of mouth, than by letter, yet I will not refuse to give you account of my brother Hooker's move and of my own, seeing that you require a reason for it from us both. We both of us concur in a threefold ground for moving.

"1. God having shut a door against both of us from ministering to him and his people in our usual congregations, and calling us by a remnant of our people, and by others of this country to minister to them here, and opening a door to us this way, who are we that we should strive against God and refuse to follow the concurrence of his ordinance and providence together, calling us forth to minister here. If we may and ought to follow God's calling three hundred miles, why not three thousand?

"2. Our Savior's warrant is in our case, that when we are distressed in our course in one country (*nequid dicam gravius*)<sup>1</sup> we should flee to another. To choose rather to bear witness to the truth by imprisonment than by banishment, is indeed sometimes God's way, but not in a case where men have the ability of body and an opportunity to move, and no necessary engagement to stay. While Peter was young, he might gird himself and go where he would, Joh 21.8. But when he was old and unfit for travel, then God called him rather to suffer himself to be bound by others, and led along to prison, and to death. Nevertheless, in this point I conferred with the chief of our people, and offered them to bear witness to the truth I had preached, and practiced among them even unto bonds, if they conceived it might be any confirmation to their faith and patience. But they dissuaded me from that course, thinking it better for themselves, and for me, and for the church of God, to withdraw myself from the present storm, and to minister in this country to those of their town whom they had sent here before, and such others as were willing to go along with me, or to follow after me.

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"What service myself and brother Hooker might do to our people or other brethren in prison (especially in close prison, as was feared) I suppose both of us (by God's help) do the same and much more, and with more freedom from hence, as occasion is offered, besides all our other service to the people here. This is yet is enough and more than enough to fill both our hands, indeed the hands of many brethren more, such as yourself, if God were pleased to make way for your comfortable passage to us. To have tarried in England for the end you mention, to appear in defense of that cause for which we were questioned, would have been (as we conceive it in our case) to limit witness-bearing to the cause (which may be done in more ways than one) to only one way, and that is such a way as we do not see God calling us to. Did not Paul bear witness against the Levitical ceremonies, and yet chose to depart quietly out of Jerusalem — because most of the Jews would not receive his testimony concerning Christ in that question (Act 22.18) — rather than to stay at Jerusalem to bear witness to that cause, unto prison and death? It is not that we came here to strive against ceremonies (or to fight against shadows); there is no need of our further labor in that course. Our people here desire to worship God in spirit and in truth. And our people left in England know, the grounds and reasons for our suffering against these things, as well as our sufferings themselves, which we beseech the Lord to accept and bless, in our blessed Savior. How far our testimony there has prevailed with any others, to search more

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<sup>1</sup> It cannot be stated more strongly.

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seriously into the cause, we observe in thankfulness and silence, rather than speak of to the prejudice of our brethren.

“3. It has been no small inducement to us, to choose to move here, rather than to stay there, that we might enjoy the liberty, not of *some* ordinances of God, but of *all*, and all in purity. For though we bless the Lord, with you, for the gracious means of salvation which many of your congregations enjoy (of which our own souls have found the blessing, and which we desire may be forever continued, and enlarged to you), yet seeing that Christ has instituted no ordinance in vain (but all to the offering of the body of Christ); and knowing that our souls stand in need of all to the utmost — we dare not be so far wanting to the grace of Christ, and to the necessity of our own souls, as to sit down somewhere else under the shadow of some ordinances, when by two months travel we might come to enjoy the liberty of all.”<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Hooker was influential with Mr. Richard Mather, in persuading him to come to New England. In a letter to Mr. Mather on this subject, he said, “If I may speak my own thoughts freely and fully, though there are many places where men may expect and obtain greater worldly advantage, yet I believe there is not a place on the face of the earth where a person of a judicious head and a generous heart may receive greater spiritual good to himself, and do more spiritual and temporal good to others.” This encouragement from Mr. Hooker brought to this country the father and ancestor of that family of good men, whose names have stood so prominently in the ecclesiastical history of New England. Through the instrumentality of Mr. Cotton and Mr. Hooker, Mr. Mather became the pastor of the church in Dorchester, Massachusetts, shortly after his arrival.

The influence of two such masterminds as Mr. Hooker and Mr. Cotton, in the ecclesiastical affairs of Massachusetts, began to be felt soon after their arrival.

“Those who came over soon after Mr. Endicott, namely, Mr. Higginson and Mr. Skelton, in 1629, walked somewhat in an untrodden path. Therefore, it is the less to be wondered at, if they went but in and out — in some things complying too much, in some things too little — with those of the separation. And it may be, in some things, not sufficiently attending to the order of the gospel, as they themselves thought they understood afterwards. For in the beginning of things, they only accepted one another according to some general profession of the doctrine of the gospel. And the honest and good intentions they had toward one another, and so by some kind of covenant, soon molded themselves into a church in every plantation where they took up their abode — until Mr. Cotton and Mr. Hooker came over, which was in the year 1633. They cleared up the order and method of church government, according to what they apprehended was most consonant with the word of God.”<sup>2</sup>

The history of the period of Mr. Hooker’s ministry at Cambridge, is not marked by many events or transactions of importance, aside from the usual duties of a diligent and faithful pastor and teacher. He had not come to New England in pursuit of adventures, nor to do things which would make him famous among his countrymen. He had come to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ; to live himself, and to assist others to live, in holiness; and to prepare for heaven. Moreover he needed quietness and rest, such as consisted with his beloved work as an “ambassador for Christ.” And his Lord and Master mercifully gave him, during his first years in New England, a season of rest. And in this, as it now appears, he was in preparation for arduous and responsible labors, both as a Christian minister, and as a member of the body politic, with which he filled up the concluding period of his life.

Mr. Hooker gave himself diligently to his work among the people of his own pastoral charge. And he took a prominent part with the other ministers of Massachusetts Bay, in whatever was to be

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<sup>1</sup> Hutchinson’s Mass. Bay, vol. III, pp, 55-57.

<sup>2</sup> Hubbard’s Hist. in Mass. Hist. Coll., XV. 181, 182.

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done to give stability and strength to the church and to the Colony. Winthrop notes his association with Warham, Cotton, and Welde, in the maintenance of a weekly Thursday Lecture in Boston, Cambridge, Dorchester, and Roxbury.

“Oct 5. It being found that the four lectures took too much time, and proved overly burdensome to the ministers and people; the ministers — with the advice of the magistrates, and the consent of their congregations — agreed to reduce them to two days: Mr. Cotton at Boston on Thursday, the 5th day of the week; Mr. Hooker at Newtown the next 5th day, and Mr. Warham at Dorchester one 4th day of the week, and Mr. Welde at Roxbury the next 4th day.”<sup>1</sup>

Richly must these good men have enjoyed the privileges of a ministry exercised under DO other constraints than the holy fear of God and the love of Christ.

In 1634, Mr. Hooker was the preacher before the General Court, held at Cambridge. We find him in 1633, associated with Haynes; and in 1635, with Cotton and Wilson in consultation for the purpose of reconciling some differences between Governor Winthrop and Lieutenant Governor Dudley, in regard to the manner of administering the government of the Colony.<sup>2</sup> Winthrop had been in favor of leniency adapted to their circumstances as an infant colony; and Dudley being in favor of more strictness. The result of their consultation was such as might have been expected from the efforts of such men, prayerfully devoting themselves to the work of peace-making.

In 1634, Mr. Hooker was also associated with Mr. Cotton and Mr. Welde, by the desire of the Assistants, in a conference with Mr. John Eliot, respecting a sermon in which he had taken occasion to speak against a peace made with the Pequots.<sup>3</sup> The result of the conference was that Mr. Eliot was brought to acknowledge his error, and to make a public retraction of it on the next Lord's day.<sup>4</sup>

In this year, also, Mr. Hooker was called to experience severe domestic affliction, in the loss of a young son, by smallpox.<sup>5</sup>

Toward the conclusion of the period of Mr. Hooker's residence in Massachusetts bay, he was engaged in a discussion before the General Court, with Mr. Roger Williams, respecting his peculiar views, which had created no small excitement in the colony. The occasion was this: Mr. Williams appeared before the General Court and the assembled ministers of the commonwealth. He was asked about certain letters; in one of which he had made complaints to the churches against the magistrates. And in another, addressed to his own church, he had endeavored to persuade them to renounce communion with the other churches. In the presence of this body of men, “Mr. Hooker was appointed to dispute with Mr. Williams.”<sup>6</sup> Although the result of the discussion between the two men was not what had been desired, the fact that Mr. Hooker, apparently without any previous notice, was designated on the part of the General Court and the ministers of Massachusetts bay, to enter the arena of disputation with “Roger Williams,” indicates the confidence with which they relied on Mr. Hooker's intellectual power and ready skill in public debate. He appears, on this occasion, not as a lover of controversy, but in the performance of a public duty, assigned to him by men to whom it became him to show respect as to their wishes, even at the sacrifice of his own preference to remain silent.

At about this period, a considerable disturbance arose in the colony of Massachusetts bay, from cutting the cross out of the military colors, at Salem. This was the act of Mr. Endicott, in his zeal

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<sup>1</sup> Savage's *Winthrop*, vol. I, p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> Savage's *Winthrop*, I, 117, 118, 177.

<sup>3</sup> Native Americans who inhabited eastern Connecticut and spoke a variety of Mohegan-Pequot.

<sup>4</sup> Mass. Hist. Coll. VIII. 29; and Savage's *Winthrop*, I. 151.

<sup>5</sup> Savage's *Winthrop*, I. 385.

<sup>6</sup> Mass. Hist. Coll. VIII. 17, note.

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against anti-Christian superstition.”<sup>1</sup> The honesty of Mr. Endicott’s intentions appears to have been unquestioned; and he seems to have supposed himself justified by some of Mr. Williams’ preaching. He acted, however, without Mr. Williams’ advice; and it does not appear that Mr. Williams ever justified the act, after it was done. Mr. Endicott thus brought himself into serious difficulty with the authorities of the colony.

In the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society is preserved a manuscript by Mr. Hooker, “Touching the Crosse in the Banners.” It is not found as published, in any of the historical memorials of New England; nor is it clear, from the paper itself, to whom it was addressed. Mr. Hooker’s apology for writing at all upon the subject is contained in the following paragraphs:

“That now I express myself (my witness in heaven) is not like it is from opposition to any man’s person or opinion. For the Lord knows it is my affliction to differ in judgment from many of my faithful brethren, and it is most cross to my inclination to express contrarily in this. But being importuned, publicly and privately, by speech and letter — and that is by some to whom I owe much in the Lord, and without whose invitation it was in my heart never to put pen to paper on this point — conceiving myself thus constrained by call, to express my sudden apprehensions, I crave leave, by way of inquisition only, to propose an argument or two.

“Not that I am a friend to the cross as an idol, or to any idolatry in it; or that any carnal fear takes me aside and makes me unwilling to give way to the evidence of the truth, because of the sad consequences that may be suspected to flow from it. I bless the Lord, my conscience accuses me of no such thing; but that as yet, I am not able to see the sinfulness of this banner in a civil use. Those who see none, by grace received, and to whom the Lord is pleased to give a more speedy discerning of things propounded to them, must not take it ill, if those who have been long settled in some principles (which they conceive to be truth), are heavy of apprehension to see through things objected, or yet to clear their own thoughts; and therefore, they need and crave a longer time of consideration before they can come to determine anything.”

The expression, “as yet, I am not able to see the sinfulness of this banner in a civil use,” presents the general view which Mr. Hooker took of the matter. He quietly goes on to justify this general view, presenting such suggestions as the following:

“1. It is requisite, even necessary, that some banner be displayed in war.

“2. This banner, in a civil way, is as apt to attain the aid in gathering and guiding soldiers as any other.

“3. Had it never been abused, idolatrously and superstitiously, there would have been no more question of using *this* than any other.

“4. This abuse is that which is superadded to the civil use — namely, when it was impiously instituted and observed as a cause of protection from danger; or delivering men out of danger — *then* it was made an idol, and set in place of God, in whose hands only, protection and preservation is found. When it was also ordained and appointed as a moral or sacramental sign, to draw or stir the bearer to Christ in love or hope — *then* it became superstitious. This superstitious abuse, as it was superadded, so may it be removed again from the natural and civil use of it, being only a separable adjunct.”

The foregoing extracts, from the manuscript, are sufficient to show that Mr. Hooker had not been set on fire by this matter, and was not willing that the colony of Massachusetts Bay should be blown up into a popular blaze respecting it. Nor did he have any disposition to involve himself in a controversy upon the subject with Mr. Williams, or his zealous and well-meaning friend, Mr. Endicott. The piece is worth publishing entire, if our limits permitted, as exemplifying the union

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<sup>1</sup> Knowles’ Life of Roger Williams, p. 62.



### Chapter 3. Arrival in New England.

of a right and charitable temper, with “the spirit of wisdom” in a good man, for the arrest of contention, and the restoration of peace among men in commotion.

Cotton Mather, speaking of this excitement, says, “Some of our chief worthies maintained their different persuasions, with weapons that indeed, were no worse than a little harmless and learned ink-shed.” The biographer of Roger Williams gives Mr. Hooker the credit for having written a tract of nearly thirteen pages in defense of the cross.” The counsels of peace, it seems, prevailed. “The matter was finally settled by leaving out the cross in the colors of the trained bands, and retaining it in the banner of the castle and of vessels”<sup>1</sup>

This little passage in the history of those times is of interest to us of the present day, as indicating that from the first planting of the tree of liberty in New England, civil and religious, it was a settled point that there never could be for a moment, the least toleration here, of any thing which would be a symbol of Popery. The Puritans had seen enough of such things on the other side of the ocean. They loved “the cross of Christ,” in the New Testament sense of that expression. But they neither wanted, nor for a moment, would tolerate, any other than New Testament provisions and aids for the guidance of their minds, or the proper affecting of their hearts, in the contemplation of this great and glorious theme.

At no period of his life does Mr. Hooker appear to have courted controversy. Nevertheless, when it was required by the interests of Christian truth and gospel order, he was ready for the discharge of his share of this duty.

With these last pieces of public service, Mr. Hooker closed his labors as a citizen and minister of Massachusetts Bay. The period of his residence there had been a brief one. But it was filled up as became “a good minister of Jesus Christ,” with abundant labors; and these were performed with the spirit and fidelity of one “ready for every good work.”

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<sup>1</sup> Knowles' Life of Roger Williams, p. 68, note.

## Chapter 4. Relocation to Hartford.

Mr. Hooker's plan of relocating, with his people, to Hartford. Discussion of the subject in the General Court. Reasons Assigned. Other reasons, probable. Journey of the emigrating pastor and church to Hartford. Vindication of Mr. Hooker from certain misrepresentations of his reasons for the move.

WE now come to that important period in the life of Mr. Hooker, in which originated the plan for his emigration with his church from Cambridge, to found a new colony on Connecticut river. It was an event which resulted in the settlement of Hartford, and put in motion a train of events of high importance in the history of Connecticut, both as a State and a community of churches. Mr. Hooker was the leader in this enterprise, as he had been the originator, and thus he became one of the founders of the commonwealth.

It is quite natural to ask here, Why should Mr. Hooker move from Newtown? Why leave the prosperous colony of Massachusetts Bay? He was almost idolized as the pastor of his church, not all of whom might be able to move with him; he was settled in pastoral comfort, doubtless permanently if he so pleased; he had strong, as well as numerous inducements to remain, such as the excellent circle of ministerial society about him; the pleasant character and prosperous condition of the churches which had been planted in Boston, Dorchester, Roxbury, Watertown, Salem, and Lynn; he had also reached the meridian of his life, the time to begin thinking of its decline, and to plan for old age — under such circumstances, presenting strong inducements to remain in that goodly home, why should he break away? Why should he travel through the wilderness more than a hundred miles, to settle in the vicinity of twelve or fifteen thousand Indians, besides many jealous and quarrelsome Dutchmen — with a company of one hundred men, women, and children — to begin the planting of a new colony, and the construction, from the beginning, of a new order of things, both civil and ecclesiastical?

Puritans were not usually men of inexplicable movements. And Mr. Hooker, as we have seen in all his history up to this time, always had good reasons for his proceedings. And he was ready to make them known, whenever it was necessary, for the satisfaction of his Christian brethren.

This emigration to Hartford was not a hasty or ill-advised measure. The subject of moving, as a matter of imperious necessity, had been brought before the General Court of Massachusetts in September 1634. This was only one year subsequent to Mr. Hooker's arrival from England. And almost two years elapsed before the move actually took place.

Because the reasons for this movement, so far as Mr. Hooker was concerned, have been and continue to this day, to be misunderstood by some, and misrepresented by others — it is proper and necessary to give here the authentic and impartial history of the discussions of the subject, and the measures which preceded the emigration, as given by Governor Winthrop:

"September 4, [1634]. The General Court began at Newtown, and continued a week, and then was adjourned fourteen days. Many things were there agitated and concluded, such as fortifying in Castle Island, Dorchester and Charlestown; also against tobacco, and costly apparel, and immodest fashions. And committees appointed for setting out the bounds of towns, with diverse other matters which do not appear on the record. But the main business, which spent the most time, and caused the adjourning of the court, was about the move of Newtown. They had leave, at the last general court, to look out for some place for enlargement or relocation, with a promise of having it confirmed to them, if it were not prejudicial to any other plantation. And now they moved that they might have leave to remove to Connecticut. This matter was debated diverse days, and many reasons were alleged, *pro* and *con*. The principal reasons for the relocation were,

— 1. Their lack of accommodation for their cattle, so as they were not able to maintain their ministers, nor could they receive any more of their friends to help them. And here it was alleged by Mr. Hooker, as a fundamental error, that towns were set so near to each other.

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“2. The fruitfulness and commodiousness of Connecticut, and the danger of having it possessed by others, Dutch and English.

“3. The strong bent of their spirits to move there.

“*Against* these it was said —

“1. That in point of conscience, they should not depart from us, being knit to us in one body, and bound by oath to seek the welfare of this commonwealth.

“2. That in point of state and civil policy, we should not give them leave to depart. (1) Being that we were now weak and in danger of being assailed. (2) The departure of Mr. Hooker would not only draw many from us, but also divert other friends who would come to us. (3) We would expose them to evident peril, both from the Dutch (who made claim to the same river, and had already built a fort there), and from the Indians; and also from our own state at home, who would not endure them to sit down without a patent in any place which our king lays claim to.

“3. They might be accommodated at home by some enlargement which other towns offered.

“4. They might move to Merrimack, or any other place within our patent.

“5. The removing of a candlestick is a great judgment, which is to be avoided.”<sup>1</sup>

“Upon these and other arguments, the court being divided, it was put to a vote. And of the deputies, fifteen were for their departure, and ten against it. The governor and two assistants were for it, and the deputy and all the rest of the assistants were against it (except the secretary, who gave no vote). Whereupon, no record was entered, because there were not six assistants in the vote, as the patent requires. Upon this, a great difference grew between the governor and assistants and the deputies. They would not yield the assistants a negative voice, and the others (considering how dangerous it might be to the commonwealth, if they did not keep that strength to balance the greater number of the deputies), thought it safe to stand upon it. So, when they could proceed no further, the whole court agreed to keep a day of humiliation to seek the Lord. This was accordingly done in all the congregations, the 18th day of this month; and on the 24th, the court met again.

Before they began, Mr. Cotton preached (being desired by all the court, upon Mr. Hooker’s instant excuse of his unfitness for that occasion). He took his text out of Hag 2.4, etc., out of which he laid down the nature or strength (as he termed it) of the magistracy, ministry, and people; namely, — the strength of the magistracy as to their authority; of the people, as to their liberty; and of the ministry, as to their purity. And he showed how all these had a negative voice, etc., and yet, that the ultimate resolution, etc., ought to be in the whole body of the people, etc., with an answer to all objections, and a declaration of the people’s duty and right to maintain their true liberties against any unjust violence, etc., which gave great satisfaction to the company. And it pleased the Lord to so assist him, and to bless his own ordinance, that the affairs of the court went on cheerfully. And although all were not satisfied about the negative voice to be left to the magistrates, yet no man moved anything about it. And the congregation of Newtown came and accepted such an enlargement as had freely been offered them by Boston and Watertown. And so the fear of their move to Connecticut was removed.”<sup>2</sup>

The absolute necessity for the move of Mr. Hooker and his church to some other place will further appear from these considerations. The emigration of Hooker, Cotton, and Stone from England to New England, had given a new impulse to the spirit of emigration among the English Puritans,

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<sup>1</sup> A curious objection, alluding to Rev 2.5 — Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place-- unless you repent.

<sup>2</sup> Savage’s *Winthrop*, I. 140-142.

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insomuch that multitudes were now arriving every month, to establish themselves here.<sup>1</sup> The country around Boston was as yet cleared only in moderate space for making settlements, and for raising crops and the sustenance of the inhabitants and their cattle. Moreover it was a matter of some delicacy for the first settlers, the moment their friends from England set foot upon land, to advise them to plunge immediately into the wilderness of the interior in search of homes. It was far more in accordance with the spirit of Puritanism, that there should be some sacrifice of present comfort and convenience on the part of the earlier and more experienced settlers in the vicinity of Boston, to accommodate the emigrants, who had yet to learn what it was like to live in a new country.

To show how great was the stream of emigration which was setting towards this country, a single fact will suffice. In a letter from Governor Winthrop to his son, dated “this 26th of the 2nd month 1636,” he thus writes: “Mr. Hooker and his company intend to set out three weeks from now.” Directly under this sentence, in the form of a postscript, he adds, “This night we hear of a ship arrived at Pemaquid, and of twenty-four ships upon the seas, bound here.” Such a piece of intelligence as this must have settled the question respecting the expediency of emigrating to Hartford, and brought them to the conclusion that somebody must move in order to make room for the multitudes who were known to be on their way to New England.

The foresight and peaceable disposition of Mr. Hooker, moreover, led him to suggest the advice, that they should not incur the danger of an *Ezek* or a *Sitnah*” (*i.e.*, contention and hatred), when they might have a *Rehoboth*” (room, commodious and abundant space, Gen 26.20-22).

In addition to these arguments for Mr. Hooker’s move with his church to Hartford, other probable reasons may be assigned, when we consider the man in his character and his obvious motives of action; and when we also look at him in his association with other Puritans, for the great purposes contemplated in their emigration to New England. Men like Hooker, Haynes, Stone, and Hopkins, in taking this step, in the face of all the objections urged by their brethren of the colony, and in view of all the perils of the wilderness, must have acted under higher and better impulses than those which regarded only their personal and private interests. They were Christian men, having made a high and determined consecration of themselves to the great interests of civil and religious liberty. We must believe that they were looking beyond the bound of their own brief lives to the results of their decisions and movements, as they could be anticipated by the sagacity of men living for the good of coming generations.

With reverence let it be it said, also, we believe that He “from whom all holy desires and all just counsels proceed,” had “put it into their hearts to fulfill his will,” and to execute the plans suggested by his grace. These plans were to take deep hold upon the interests of a republic, destined, as now appears, to stretch itself from ocean to ocean, and to spread out to the north and to the south, through many degrees of latitude. We seem to see, in Hooker and his associates, while weighing the question of their move, that which is sometimes seen in wise and good men — a almost prophetic forecast, under the influence of which they project plans and perform acts which take hold upon the future, almost as directly as if the God in whom they trusted had enabled them to look into futurity. Mr. Hooker was not an inspired prophet, but he had subjected his own mind to the Infinite Mind; he had put his hand into the hand of Him of whom it is written, “You led your people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron.” He appears to have perceived and obeyed some intimations of Providence, in the direction of the proposed scene of the new plantation, which other men around him had not observed. And it is a circumstance to make the people of Connecticut at this day, feel a satisfaction that is almost sacred, while they look back to the date of the pending question, and then follow the course of events for more than two hundred years, to the present time — and while they remember why they are in so goodly a portion of this

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<sup>1</sup> Mass. Hist. Col., XV, 169.

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garden, New England, and what their commonwealth is in its great interests — social, civil, educational, and religious — and while they consider that the God of our fathers was leading His tried and faithful servant in the way in which He would both bless him, and through his means, bless them “in these last days”

This account of the reasons for the relocation of Mr. Hooker and his people to Hartford has been necessary, that he may be vindicated against an imputation which appears in the histories of both Hubbard and Hutchinson,<sup>1</sup> and has unfortunately been countenanced in Robertson’s History of America.<sup>2</sup> Robertson says: “The rivalry between Mr. Cotton and Mr. Hooker, two favorite ministers in the settlement of Massachusetts Bay, disposed the latter, who was the least successful in this contest for fame and power, to wish some settlement at a distance from a competitor, by whom his reputation was eclipsed. A good number of those who had imbibed Mrs. Hutchinson’s notions, and were offended by those who combatted them, offered to accompany him.”

If Mr. Hooker had such a reason for moving to Hartford, it is rather remarkable that it was not discovered in the course of the protracted discussion of this subject which, as already seen, arose in the General Court. It is quite certain that no such reason was discovered or believed to exist, from the fact that Winthrop’s history of the investigation does not give the slightest intimation of it. Moreover, the statement that some of Mrs. Hutchinson’s followers proposed to follow Mr. Hooker to Hartford, so far from being true, is utterly without foundation. For Mrs. Hutchinson’s affairs were not publicly agitated till *after* Mr. Hooker’s move. Furthermore, Mr. Hooker was the last man in the whole circle of New England ministers from whom Mrs. Hutchinson and her followers could have expected any sympathy. For as it appeared subsequently, “this church as well as their minister, were more opposite to Mrs. Hutchinson and all the Antinomians, than any church in Massachusetts.”<sup>3</sup>

Besides all this, everything which appears in New England history, respecting the intercourse of Mr. Hooker and Mr. Cotton, contradicts the imputation now under consideration, and it goes to show that they were always on terms of most fraternal and honorable friendship. They were companions in sufferings before they left England. They came to New England together. When asked why they left that country for this, they united in assigning their reasons. They took the freeman’s oath together in this country.<sup>4</sup> They were associated in the labors of the ministry. They were both philanthropists and lovers of civil and religious liberty. They were co-moderators of an assembly held at Cambridge, in consequence of an attempt to introduce Presbyterian government and discipline into the colony. And the names of no two men of their time, in the country, are more frequently mentioned together, as fraternally associated in the affairs of the churches, than the names of Hooker and Cotton.

Robertson is supposed to have derived his views of Hooker’s motives from Douglass, who vented profuse anger upon the good people of New England after a short residence among them. His reputation as a historian, for either candor or veracity, is not altogether enviable.<sup>5</sup> The testimony, therefore, of Governor Winthrop, a faithful and impartial historian who was on the spot at the time, is preferable to that of two foreigners, three thousand miles off, who wrote under the obvious influence of prejudice against the Puritans of New England.

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<sup>1</sup> Hist. of Eng., 305, and Hist. Mass. Br, I, 43.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. I, p. 441.

<sup>3</sup> Eccl. Hist. Mass., p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> *Freeman’s Oath*: In the Massachusetts Bay Colony, a man had to be a member of the Church to be a freeman. It carried with it the right to vote and own land, and be a member of the governing body — to make and enforce laws and pass judgment in civil and criminal matters. As the colonies grew, freemen chose deputy governors in the upper house of the General Court, and assistant governors in the lower house. They chose the governor from among their ranks.

<sup>5</sup> See Eccl. Hist. Mass., pp. 40, 41, note. Mr. Hutchinson’s Mass. Br., I, 208, and II, 80.

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The following account of this important move from Newtown to Hartford, is given by Trumbull:

“About the beginning of June, Mr. Hooker, Mr. Stone, and about a hundred men, women, and children, took their departure from Cambridge, and traveled more than a hundred miles, through hideous and trackless wildernesses, to Hartford. They had no guide but their compass. They made their way over mountains, through swamps, thickets, and rivers, which were not passable without great difficulty. They had no cover but the heavens, nor any lodgings but those which simple nature afforded them. They drove with them a hundred and sixty head of cattle, and by the way, subsisted on the milk of their cows. Mrs. Hooker was borne through the wilderness on a litter. The people generally carried their packs, arms, and some utensils. They were nearly a fortnight on their journey. This adventure was even more remarkable, as many of this company were persons of figure, who had lived in England in honor, affluence, and delicacy, and entire strangers to fatigue and danger.”<sup>1</sup>

It is to be regretted that not one of the historians who have noticed this remarkable journey, has given any precise information respecting the route pursued from Newtown to Hartford. Hutchinson mentions “many hideous swamps and very high mountains, beside five or six rivers, or different parts of the same winding river (the Chickapi), not fordable everywhere, which they could not avoid.”<sup>2</sup>

The “Chickapi” River was doubtless the one which now bears the name *Chickopee*, rising in the vicinity of what is now Worcester, Massachusetts, pursuing a circuitous course through the towns now known as Spencer, Brookfield and Palmer, receiving on its way several tributary streams, large and small, rising in New Braintree and Petersham — part of them constituting the Ware and Swift rivers, and falling into the Connecticut above Springfield. Supposing the company of emigrants to have taken a direct course from Boston to what is now Spencer — the place where they perhaps struck the Chickapi (or Chickopee) River — they must have crossed the Charles and the Concord rivers and some smaller streams tributary to them. Following the general course of the Chickopee, they must have kept for most of their way, within the limits of Massachusetts, and approached the Connecticut not far from where Springfield now stands. Whether they crossed this river so high up, and passed down to Hartford on the west side, or continued their journey on the east side till near the point at which they were aiming, is unknown. Tradition has spoken of the latter.<sup>3</sup>

The condition of the country at that time, on the route now described (which was probably the one pursued), should be considered a wilderness, without roads, bridges, or ferries. Looking also at the number of the streams, and the size of some of them as they now are; and taking into the account the hills, valleys, swamps, and ravines — all of them doubtless rendered more forbidding from being embraced in a wilderness — the conclusion will be natural, that a journey from Boston to Hartford, two hundred years ago, must have been attended with toils and dangers hardly surpassed in those days, by a journey from the capital of Massachusetts across the continent of North America to the mouth of the Columbia River.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hist. Conn., I, 64, 65.

<sup>2</sup> Hutchinson, I, 45.

<sup>3</sup> If the journey of the emigrants was on the west side of the river, the observer of contrasts and student of modern “progress” will find matter for interesting comparison between a journey from Boston to Hartford in 1686 and one in 1849; the first requiring nearly a fortnight, at the rate of ten miles per day, and the second by railroad along the same route, less than six hours from city to city.

<sup>4</sup> Comparing it to the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1803-1806, for its unknown dangers, and the courage required.

## Chapter 5. Influence in the State – His Death.

Arrival at Hartford. Share of Mr. Hooker in the concerns of the Colony of Connecticut superadded to his ministerial services. Contemporaries and associates in the colonies of Connecticut. Estimate of his position and influence in the state. Concern in originating the New England Confederacy. Invitation to a seat in the Westminster Assembly of Divines, in England. Reasons for declining the invitation. Last sickness. Death. Letter of Mr. Stone relative to his decease.

WE find Mr. Hooker and his church at “Hartford upon Connecticut,” in June 1636. He was there, too, for reasons he need not be ashamed to see “written on the sky,” to be read by all whom they might concern. They were reasons which well became him as a Christian and a member of the civil state. He was there to be, with other wise and good men, the founder of a state as well as of churches of Christ. And by his little colony of godly men, together with those of New Haven and Saybrook, was commenced the erection of the good State of Connecticut that now is. “History,” says an eminent New England historian of our own time, “has ever celebrated the heroes who have won laurels in scenes of carnage. Has it no place for the founders of states; the wise legislators who struck the rock in the wilderness, so that the waters of liberty gushed forth in copious and perennial fountains? Those who judge men by their services to the human race, will never cease to honor the memory of Hooker and of Haynes.”<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Hooker’s Church, before their emigration to New England, had chosen Mr. Samuel Stone to be associated with him as a teacher. Mr. Stone’s great excellence of character made him highly esteemed by them; and we find him continuing with Mr. Hooker and the church, in all their moves, and in the one to Hartford. That fact speaks well, both for the ministers and their people. This happy union continued during the life of Mr. Hooker.

It is appropriate in the sketch of this period in the life of Mr. Hooker, that we speak of him in this new field of his labors, not only as a Christian minister and pastor of the Church in Hartford, and in his ecclesiastical relations to the State, but also in his relations to the colony, and in his promotion of its interests, both civil, literary, and moral.

The exigencies of that period in Connecticut were such that they called for the counsels and cooperation of all men of intellectual force, education, prudence, sagacity, and moral courage — men capable of understanding the true interests of the colony; who could weigh difficult questions, and assist in settling first principles, so that they would not soon need revision. It was of the greatest importance that the ministers of the gospel should cordially cooperate with the civil fathers, as men who could appreciate their just decisions, and second (by their approval) all wise and efficient measures tending to the public welfare.

Whatever may be said respecting the inexpediency of Christian ministers engaging in civil and political life in a *settled* country, it is evident that in the commencement of the work which our fathers undertook, men like Thomas Hooker — whether they were in the Christian ministry or out of it; men of intellect, heart, prudence, decision, and efficiency — had high responsibilities to civil society. And they had important duties to perform in the promotion of the best interests of the state. In relation to this subject, they had to choose between diligent cooperation with the civil fathers, on the one hand; and on the other, seclusion and inaction, amounting to treachery towards the state, and destructive to the Christian ministry at the same time.

True, Mr. Hooker did not precisely sustain the relation to the colony of Connecticut, which his friend Mr. Cotton did to that of Massachusetts — a teacher in the pulpit on the Sabbath, of the principles of legislation which the General Court could embody in enactments the following week. But his mind, opinions and counsels were influential in the more informal and social deliberations of wise and good men, upon the internal policy of the colony, and in the projection of its laws.

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<sup>1</sup> Bancroft’s History of the United States, vol. I, p. 403.

## Chapter 5. Influence in the State – His Death.

Though not a member of the law-making body, that body had the benefit of his counsels in connection with those by whom they were proposed. “Though he did not appear to seek after civil appointments, yet such was the confidence of the General Court in his integrity and ability, that he was occasionally appointed to important Committees. In 1639, Mr. Hooker and Mr. Wells were appointed by the General Court to consult with Mr. Fenwick “concerning the Bay’s aiding in an offensive and defensive war; <sup>1</sup> also relating to the bounds of patents on Connecticut river. In 1640, together with Mr. Wells, he was appointed to close a controversy which had long existed between Lieut. Robert Seeley and the plantation at Wethersfield. And he received other appointments from the General Court.” <sup>2</sup>

It is to the honor of the public men of that time, in Connecticut, who were employed in giving shape to civil institutions, that they were not at all infected with that absurd jealousy of the political influence of gospel ministers, which in more recent times has even sought to disfranchise every man who occupies a pulpit, for fear that he will either attempt the “union of Church and State,” or use his privileges as a freeman and minister, to overturn “the State”

Because Mr. Hooker’s agency and influence in public and religious concerns was somewhat prominent after his move to Hartford, some notices of his contemporaries in the colonies which now constitute Connecticut, and a brief view of public affairs in his lifetime, will be given here; and then the history of his course as a Christian minister will be resumed.

One of the “worthies” with whom Mr. Hooker acted, in the concerns of the colony of Connecticut, was EDWARD HOPKINS; styled by Cotton Mather “the Solomon of his colony” — a man who added to his wisdom, a high Christian character and enlarged benevolence in action.

JOHN HAYNES, of the same colony, was the worthy compeer <sup>3</sup> of Hopkins; if we judge from the fact that, for a considerable course of years, he was chosen Governor of the colony, alternately with Hopkins.

GEORGE WILLYS, THOMAS WELLS, and JOHN WEBSTER, are styled by Mather, men of “wisdom, justice, and courage.”

WILLIAM LEET was a man, like Daniel of old, of “an excellent spirit;” he was chosen Governor after the union of the two colonies of New Haven and Connecticut.

THEOPHILUS EATON, Governor of the colony of New Haven, was a man of great discretion, gravity, and equity; one whom Mather, borrowing from Luke’s address at the beginning of his gospel, styles “most excellent Theophilus.”

Rev. JOHN DAVENPORT was intimately associated with Eaton, and the two men have been styled, “the Moses and Aaron of the colony” of New Haven.

FRANCIS NEWMAN, of that colony, Mr. Eaton’s successor in the office of Governor, was a man of the same style of character with him, having long been his associate.

ROBERT TREAT was like his predecessors, Eaton and Newman, in his general character; and he was repeatedly called to office by the voice of the people.

JOHN WINTHROP II, son of the excellent Governor of the same name, in Massachusetts Bay; he was himself called very early in life into office, had much of the excellence which distinguished his

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<sup>1</sup> In all probability, this, in Hooker’s mind, was the germ of the New England Confederacy of 1643, of which notice will be taken in the sequel.

<sup>2</sup> Hinman’s Catalogue of Early Settlers of Connecticut, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> *Compeer*: a person who is of equal standing with another in a group.



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honored father: “studious, humble, patient,” a man of a great soul, as described by the author of *Magnalia Americana*.

Besides these, and more particularly associated with Mr. Hooker in the colony of Connecticut — with several of them distributed in the towns of Hartford, Windsor and Wethersfield — were Ludlow, Watson, Whiting, Talcott, William Hopkins, Wolcott, Hull, Phelps, William Ludlow, Mason, Mitchell, Swain, Steele, Thurston, Haynes, Ward, Westwood, and Deming.

GEORGE FENWICK did not reside long in the country; yet, while at Saybrook Plantation, he interested himself greatly in the welfare of the Hartford Church and their Pastor, and he deserves a place among the worthies of the State. With him should be mentioned, Gardiner, Peters, Leffingwell, and Tracy — men of note at the mouth of Connecticut river; also the Huntingtons, Baldwins, Reynoldses, Backuses, Blissess, Watermans, Hydes, Posts, Smiths, and others, who were subsequently the settlers of Norwich and vicinity.<sup>1</sup>

These were men of sterling excellence of character, who assisted in laying the foundations of Connecticut, and who devoted their eminent abilities, their time, and their estates, to the great purposes of civil and religious freedom. It was the privilege and the happiness of Mr. Hooker to be associated with such men, more or less during the last eleven years of his life and labors for Connecticut, and for New England at large. To have associated and acted with such men, and by the exercise of his wisdom and influence in their councils, in relation to the affairs of the rising Commonwealth — to have contributed so richly to make Connecticut what it was in its youth, and what it has been since — was an honor not inferior to that of any other man whose name is registered in the history of New England.

The learned and venerable President Dwight, whose long residence in Connecticut led him to study its history with much care, thus writes of Mr. Hooker:

“On the affairs of the infant colony, his influence was commanding. Little was done without his approval; and almost everything he approved was one of *course*. The measures which were actually adopted under his influence were contrived and executed with so much felicity, as to have sustained, with high reputation, the scrutiny of succeeding ages. Happily, he infused his spirit not only into his contemporaries, but into most of those who in succeeding generations have been entrusted with the public interests of this State. A distinguished share of the moderation, wisdom, and firmness, which adorned Mr. Hooker, has been conspicuous in the public measures of Connecticut down to the present day.<sup>2</sup> An equal degree of uniformity in public measures has not, so far as I know, existed in any country for the same length of time. Certainly there has been no such continued uniformity of wisdom and moderation; of measures which rarely demanded to be retraced; on which party spirit had so little influence; or in which passion or prejudice was so little conspicuous. For this character, the inhabitants of Connecticut are eminently indebted to the great and good man who is the subject of these remarks. If I may be allowed to give an opinion, he was the wisest of all those distinguished colonists who had a peculiar influence on the early concerns of this country”<sup>3</sup>

But it was not alone in the promotion of the fundamental interests of Connecticut, that Mr. Hooker labored for the last eleven years of his life. He had lived nearly three years, as we have already seen, in the colony of Massachusetts Bay. And he had been associated with Governor Winthrop, senior, and with Cotton, Norton, and many other good men of that colony, in planning and carrying into execution, measures both civil and religious, which were fundamental in all the subsequent interests of Massachusetts. Strong points of resemblance in the characteristics of

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<sup>1</sup> Trumbull's Hist. Conn., I.

<sup>2</sup> Written in 1810.

<sup>3</sup> Dwight's Travels, vol. I, pp. 238, 239.

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Connecticut and Massachusetts have been obvious from the first. To account for these resemblances is easy when we consider the fact that in the separate catalogues of their wise, great, and good men, are recorded some of the same names — and among the first class of them, the name of Thomas Hooker — men in Connecticut who came from the highest ranks of influence, office, and usefulness in Massachusetts, to do for Connecticut what they had done for *that* State. With all becoming courtesy and respect, but with entire New England frankness, may it be said that Massachusetts is therefore under high obligations to Hooker and his associates — as instruments in the hands of a merciful Providence — for what she too has been and still is, as an honorable member of the Union.

But it is proper to go further still. The name NEW ENGLAND., is a name which is loved and cherished by more than four million people who fill its cities, towns and villages; and who spread themselves abroad upon its plains, and over its hills, and among its valleys and mountains, and along its rivers. It is also loved and cherished by still other millions, who call New England their native country, or trace to its families their parentage and ancestry; and who, from the west, and the south, look to New England and call it the home of their own childhood, or the home of their fathers. It is due to the name and memory of Thomas Hooker, that the fact is stated (pertaining to the present memoir) that in the original plan for the confederation, called by the name of “the United Colonies of New England,” he was from the first, actively, and earnestly concerned.

Governor Winthrop, in his journal under the date of 1639, has the following passage:

“Mr. Haynes, the Governor of Connecticut, and Mr. Hooker, etc., came into the bay and stayed nearly a month. It appeared by them, that they were desirous to secure the treaty of confederation with us. And though they themselves would not move it, yet by their means, it was moved by our General Court, and adopted. For they were in some doubt about the Dutch, who had lately received a new Governor, a more discreet and sober man than the former, and one who complained much about the injury done to them at Connecticut. He was very forward to hold correspondence with us, and very inquisitive about how things stood between us and them, of Connecticut. This occasioned us to more readily to renew the former treaty, so that the Dutch might not take notice of any breach or alienation between us.” <sup>1</sup>

The transaction thus recorded was doubtless preparatory to that which Winthrop records “Mo. 3, 10,” 1643, as follows:

“At this Court came the Commissioners from Plymouth, Connecticut and New Haven, viz., from Plymouth, Mr. Edward Winslow and Mr. Collier; from Connecticut, Mr. Haynes and Mr. Hopkins, with whom Mr. Fenwick of Saybrook joined; from New Haven, Mr. Theophilus Eaton and Mr. Grigson. Our Court chose a Committee to treat with them, viz., the Governor and Mr. Dudley and Mr. Bradstreet, being of the magistrates, and of the deputies, Captain Gibbons, Mr. Tyng the treasurer and Mr. Hathorn. These encountered some difficulties coming to a consultation, but all being desirous of union and studious of peace, they readily yielded to each other in such things as tended to common utility, etc.. So that, in some two or three meetings they lovingly accorded upon these ensuing articles, which being allowed by our Court, and signed by all the Commissioners, were also sent to be ratified by the General Courts of other jurisdictions; except that Plymouth Commissioners, having power only to *treat*, but not to *determine*, deferred signing them till they came home; but soon after, they were ratified by their General Court also.” <sup>2</sup>

The preamble to the articles of confederation will best answer the inquiry as to what the objects were of its establishment; and it is in the following terms:

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<sup>1</sup> Savage's Winthrop, I, 299.

<sup>2</sup> Savage's Winthrop, I, 99, 100.

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“Whereas we all came into these parts of America with one and the same end, namely, to advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to enjoy the liberties of the gospel in purity, with peace; and whereas by our settling, by the wise providence of God, we are further dispersed upon the sea-coasts and rivers than was at first intended, so that we cannot according to our desire, with convenience communicate in one government and jurisdiction; and whereas we live encompassed with people of several nations and strange languages, which hereafter may prove injurious to us or our posterity; and forasmuch as the natives have formerly committed sundry insolences and outrages upon several plantations of the English, and have of late combined themselves against us; and seeing by reason of the sad distractions in England (which they have heard of), and by which they know we are hindered both from that humble way of seeking advice, and reaping those comfortable fruits of protection, which at other times we might well expect; — we therefore conceive it our bound duty, without delay, to enter into a present consociation among ourselves for mutual help and strength in all future concernment, that as in nation and religion, so in other respects, we are and continue *one*, according to the tenor and true meaning of the ensuing articles:

“Therefore it is fully agreed and concluded between the parties above named, and by these presents, they jointly and severally agree and conclude that they all are, and henceforth will be called by the name of the United Colonies of New England.”

There were twelve articles of confederation; and they were so framed as to answer, in the best manner, the objects of it, as set forth in the preamble quoted above.<sup>1</sup> We quote from the Hon. John Quincy Adams:

“And the New England confederacy of 1643 was the model and prototype of the North American confederacy of 1774... New England, as a community, has by her incorporation in the North American Union, lost her distinctive character; and to the superficial observer, little remains of her but the name. As a portion of the great community of the North American Union, the unity and simplicity of her character, without being totally extinguished, have been transformed into one component part of a stupendous republican empire — an empire already bounded only by the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, and to the eye of prophetic inspiration, to be hereafter bounded only by the eternal ice of the northern and southern pole... We have been told that it was a daydream of our Puritan forefathers, the first settlers of New England, that they were destined to be the founders of such an empire. The foundation upon which *they* held this edifice was to be erected, was the natural equality of mankind; and the two eternal pillars upon which it was to stand were *civil and religious liberty*. The natural equality of mankind, a doctrine which they imbibed from the sacred fountain of the Scriptures, taught in the history of the creation, and forming the foundation of the religion of Jesus, settled it forever, that this empire must be that kingdom of Christ against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. For this foundation, the natural equality of mankind — and for these two pillars, civil and religious liberty — the North American Union, to whatever extent of dominion and whatever succession of ages destined to endure, will be forever indebted to the Puritan Fathers of New England.”

Mr. Hooker does not appear as a member of the board of Commissioners who completed the confederacy. Very properly, it was composed of civilians only. Nor was it necessary that he be a member, to prove his concern in it. There are some men— and he seems to have been such a one — who when a great public object which they may have been concerned in originating, is ready for its completion, are satisfied to retire and be no further known in the transaction. To such a man as Hooker, it was probably no sacrifice to stand aside, and let others enjoy the honor of publicly and officially executing the plan upon which his heart had been set (it would seem) from the day

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<sup>1</sup> For a more particular account of these Articles, the reader is referred to Hon. John Quincy Adams' discourse, at the second centennial anniversary of the event, May, 1843, as given in Mass. Hist. Coll., XXIX, 189-223. Also for the Articles themselves, see Savage's Winthrop, II, 101-106.

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he began his work at Hartford. Whether his concern in it was then known beyond the breasts of Haynes and Winthrop, and the other civil fathers of the colonies, who with him had been considering it; and whether posterity would ever discover his individual concern in it; probably were not questions with which he troubled himself a moment. His friends — Haynes, Hopkins, Winslow, Collier, Fenwick, Eaton, Grigson, Dudley, Bradstreet, Gibbons, Tyng, and Hathorn — were in Boston, finishing the work he had assisted in commencing, and for which he had sought the blessing of “the Father of lights.” They were really forming “the model and prototype of the North American Confederacy of 1774.” Meanwhile, Hooker was probably in his little study, in the retired parsonage in Hartford, perhaps framing from his Bible, that “Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline,” in which are embodied some of the choicest elements of the Ecclesiastical polity in which the Congregational Churches of New England have so long prospered and rejoiced. Or perhaps he was writing sermons; perhaps composing that choice little book, “The Poor Doubting Christian Drawn to Christ,” or his “Soul’s Preparation for Christ;” or his “Commentary on the Intercessory Prayer of Christ.” Great as had been the subjects involved in the well-being of the State, on which he had employed his thoughts, and which were at that moment occupying the civil fathers of the colonies in Boston — yet he occupied himself with the higher themes of the gospel he so loved to preach, and with seeking to build up in the hearts of men, that “kingdom of God” which is “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

The eleven short and swift years of Mr. Hooker’s life in Connecticut, in the history of the State, were marked with the rapid maturity and execution of wise and great plans for the public good. The period was also distinguished with the signal prosperity of almost every interest contemplated by the good men of the State and the time — this too, under many and great embarrassments. Not the least of these embarrassments was the liability in which the colonies of the State lived, being embroiled in wars with the Indian tribes around them, and the actual state of war in which they were sometimes involved.<sup>1</sup> It was necessary for the Connecticut militia to be in good organization for the purposes of defense, on any emergency; and for this end, to place at its head, an efficient commanding officer. This office was assigned to Captain John Mason, as Major General. On the occasion of his being invested with this office, Mr. Hooker was designated as the person to deliver to him publicly, the military staff, with an accompanying address.<sup>2</sup> Prince, in his introduction to Mason’s History of the memorable capture of the Pequot fort at Mystic,<sup>3</sup> said of Mr. Hooker’s delivery of the staff to General Mason, “We may imagine he did it with that superior piety, spirit and majesty which were peculiar to him; like an ancient prophet addressing himself to the military officer, and delivering to him the principal ensign of martial power, to lead the armies and fight the battles of the Lord and his people.”<sup>4</sup>

The associates and contemporaries of Mr. Hooker in the civil affairs of the colonies have been mentioned; and some of the principal events and features of their history and condition. We come now to speak of the ministers associated or contemporary with him, and of the course of ministerial and ecclesiastical affairs, during the same period, and during Mr. Hooker’s life.

The first ministers of the churches in the colonies that now comprise Connecticut, were as follows. In Hartford, Mr. Hooker and Mr. Stone; in Windsor, Mr. Warham and Mr. Hewet; in Wethersfield, Mr. Prudden (afterwards of Milford;) Saybrook Fort, Mr. John Higginson; New

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<sup>1</sup> Referring to the English Civil Wars (1639-1651). The Parliamentarians (Cromwell’s Puritan army) fought against the Loyalists (Charles I’s Catholic army). It is estimated that 190,000 died in the “Wars of the Three Kingdoms.” – WHG

<sup>2</sup> Trumbull’s Hist. Conn., I, 95.

<sup>3</sup> “The Mystic Massacre,” May 26, 1637, during the *Pequot War*. Connecticut colonists under Captain John Mason, with their Narragansett and Mohegan allies, set fire to the Pequot Fort near the Mystic River. They shot anyone who tried to escape the wooden palisade, and killed most of the village in retaliation for previous Pequot attacks. It should be noted that the tribes were already at war with each other; it wasn’t instigated by the settlers. (See chapter 6) – WHG

<sup>4</sup> Mass. Hist. Coll., XVIII, 124.

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Haven, Mr. Davenport and Mr. Samuel Eaton — and upon Mr. Eaton's move, Mr. William Hooke; Guilford, Mr. Henry Whitfield; Wethersfield — after the move of Mr. Prudden to Milford — Mr. Henry Smith; Saybrook — after the move of Mr. Higginson — Mr. Thomas Peters; Fairfield, Mr. Jones; Stratford, Mr. Blackman; Stamford, Mr. Denton; Branford, Mr. Abraham Pierson; New London, Mr. Blinman. "From these reverend fathers," says Trumbull, "the ministers of Connecticut trace their ordinations; especially from Mr. Hooker, Mr. Warham, Mr. Davenport, and Mr. Stone. Some or other of these assisted in gathering the churches, and ordaining the ministers settled in their day."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Hooker, Mr. Davenport and Mr. Stone, were accounted among the first men of these colonies, as respects piety, ministerial gifts, and learning. The religious habits of the ministers of that period, as described by the venerable historian of the State already quoted, were that "they were mighty and abundant in prayer. They not only fasted and prayed frequently with their people in public, but kept many days of secret fasting, prayer, and self-examination, in their studies. Some of them, it seems, fasted and prayed in this private manner, every week. Besides the exercises on the Lord's day, they preached lectures, not only in public, but from house to house. They were diligent and laborious in catechizing and instructing the children and young people, both in public and private."<sup>2</sup>

Whether Mr. Hooker was engaged in the theological instruction of candidates for the Christian ministry, does not appear in any of the histories. However, from the fact that the ministers of Connecticut were the principal instructors of those who were preparing for a collegiate course, and the fact that there were no public theological schools in that period, it is beyond doubt that Mr. Hooker bore his part with his brethren, in the work of professional education of ministers. Mr. James Fitch, who in 1646 became pastor of a church organized at Saybrook, was a theological student with him.

The influence of Mr. Hooker's habits in maintaining a high standard of family religion; and in relation to which, the testimony of John Eliot has already been given — doubtless had a concern in promoting like habits in the families of other ministers in the State, as noticed by the historian of Connecticut in the following passages.

"They paid constant attention to the religion of their families. They read the Scriptures and prayed in them daily, morning and evening, and instructed all their domestics constantly to attend the secret as well as private and public duties of religion. They were attentive to the religious state of all the families and individuals of their respective flocks. As they had 'taken up the cross,' forsaken their pleasant seats and enjoyments in their native country, and followed their Savior into 'a land not sown,' for the sake of his holy religion and the advancement of his kingdom; they sacrificed all worldly interests to these glorious purposes,"<sup>3</sup>

Connecticut has been proverbial in former years, as "the land of steady habits." And men who hate serious religion, have often made these habits the subject of ridicule. But even these have thus given indirect testimony to the worth of such habits. It is not presuming too much, nor boasting improperly of the power of ministerial influence, to express the opinion that Connecticut has been "the land of steady habits," because ministers like Hooker, Davenport and others, were men who "commanded their children and their households after them, to keep the ways of the Lord." Genuine Puritanism begins its work, for the good of the Church and the State, *in the family*; and it sends out its salutary influences into society, from as many fountains as there are families in which it presides. Amidst such influences, immorality cannot live; not in the forms of profaneness,

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<sup>1</sup> Hist. Conn., I, 278, 280.

<sup>2</sup> Trumbull's Hist. Conn., I, 280.

<sup>3</sup> Trumbull, I, 281, 282.

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intemperance, sabbath-breaking, impurity, disobedience to parents, fraud, or injustice. This was a striking feature in the times of Hooker and his worthy brethren in the Connecticut ministry.<sup>1</sup>

With such ministers, the churches highly esteemed the preaching of the gospel and the ordinances of the New Testament. The churches of that time were small, so that except in the largest, there were not more than sixteen or eighteen male members; and in some not more than eight or nine. Yet, they were determined to support the gospel. Neither poverty, nor dangers from the savage tribes around them, nor any inconveniences or privations incident to their residence in a wilderness, could prevent their maintenance of the gospel ministry. It was their solace and comfort under the trials of this life. It showed them their glorious hope for the life to come. With ministers of such devout and heavenly spirit, and of such sanctified wisdom as appeared in Hooker and his brethren of the sacred office, “the wilderness and the solitary places were glad,” and “the desert... rejoiced and blossomed as the rose.”

In the notices already recorded, of Mr. Hooker’s ministry while he resided in England, it has appeared, that he earnestly promoted the intercourse of ministers with each other, for their mutual benefit and advancement in fitness for their work. His love for the society of his brethren, carried with him, wherever he went, and living and active in him wherever he fixed his home, was probably concerned in the establishment of those ministerial organizations in Connecticut, which exist at this day. Says the author of *Ratio Disciplinae*:

“Stated meetings of ministers, which may be traced back to the earliest days of the churches were approved and recommended particularly by the venerable Hooker. It is affirmed, that during the whole of his ministerial life, the pastors in the neighborhood of his residence held frequent meetings for the purpose of mutual consultation and advice in religious things. One of the last and emphatic sayings of this father of the churches, was, ‘*we must agree upon constant meetings of ministers.*’”<sup>2</sup>

It was remarked of him while residing in Essex, England,

“The godly ministers round about the country would have recourse to him, to be directed and resolved in their difficult cases; and it was by his means that these godly ministers held their monthly meetings for fasting, prayer, and profitable conferences.”

Here is one of the grand secrets of that ever-living harmony and fraternal love, and union of views and aims and influence, which for more than two hundred years has been the beauty and strength of the Congregational ministry in New England. The ministerial bodies take different forms and names in the different States. In Connecticut, the ancient home of Thomas Hooker, and the scene of his most happy influence, they appear in three different organizations.<sup>3</sup>

*First*, the Monthly Minister’s Meeting, which embraces a small number, conveniently situated for assembling with that measure of frequency.

*Secondly*, the Association, which embraces the ministers of a county, when not too large in extent, and meeting annually or semi-annually.

*Thirdly*, the General Association of the State, in which the county or district associations meet by delegation annually; and upon the sessions of which, delegates from foreign bodies attend.

Mr. Hooker, and the other ministers of Connecticut, and those of Massachusetts, probably, all held the same general views on the subject of ministerial intercourse in associations of this description. And they laid, unitedly, the foundations of our present New England ministerial

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<sup>1</sup> Trumbull, I, 282.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Cogswell Upham, pp. 149, 150.

<sup>3</sup> See “Congregational Order,” published by direction of Gen. Asso. Conn., 1845.

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associations. They are eminently *Puritan* organizations. They have been the model for similar associations in New York and the West, which feel the influence of New England. And blessed be the memory of every Puritan father of this land who assisted in thus devising good for the Congregational ministry and Churches of our country, for generations past, present, and to come.

Let it here be distinctly understood that the honor of organizing Congregational Associations is not claimed exclusively for Thomas Hooker. It had a higher than human origin; in the gracious promptings of that “One Spirit,” who shed abroad “love to the brethren” in his heart and the hearts of his contemporary laborers in the ministry. “He, the Spirit of Truth,” has thus bound his servants together in circles smaller or larger; and has made the Congregational ministry, who hold the truth, to be one body; animated by the same spirit, and devoting themselves to the one great object that is dear to “faithful men” — “the edifying of the body of Christ.”

Mr. Hooker’s interest, however, in Christian associations did not stop with the ministry. He desired to see, and to promote, what in Connecticut and elsewhere is called the *Consociation* of the Churches, for the purposes of Christian intercourse and mutual aid in ecclesiastical affairs. These bodies, called Consociations in Connecticut, have always been composed of pastors and delegates of the churches. It is believed that the largest proportion of the churches of Connecticut proper, are and have been, from the early years of its settlement, organized in Consociations. The author of *Magnalia Americana* remarks of Mr. Hooker, that “he was a hearty friend to the *Consociation of Churches*,” and speaks of frequent meetings held during his life, in which (it is supposed) the churches were represented.<sup>1</sup>

It would seem, indeed, that nothing could be more natural, than that men who had suffered in England, as he and his brethren of the ministry and of the churches had suffered, from the oppressions of the bishops, should here seek the advantages and the comforts of both ministerial and ecclesiastical parity. Driven here for liberty, civil and ecclesiastical, and driven to their Bibles for instruction on the forms both of ministerial and ecclesiastical association, in accord with the liberty of the gospel, they came to practical conclusions which could not fail, with the divine blessing, to ensure their highest prosperity and happiness.

The general views of ecclesiastical order and discipline which Mr. Hooker entertained and promoted among the churches of the Connecticut colonies, were substantially those which shortly before the close of his life, he embodied in his admirable work, “A Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline.” A particular account of this work will be given in a subsequent chapter. It will be sufficient here, to remark that in regard to the officers of the church, and the source of their authority, his views were strictly Congregational. In other words, Hooker was an *ecclesiastical republican*. In common parlance, and in distinction from the term *Episcopal*, the churches of Connecticut are sometimes called *Presbyterian*. But in point of fact there never were Presbyterian churches in Connecticut till, within a very few years, they were organized from a Scotch population settled in a very few manufacturing villages. Mr. Hooker’s work, to which allusion has just been made, was indeed written in part for the purpose of controverting the main positions of Presbyterianism, which were all at that time set forth by writers in Scotland and England; and to draw the lines of demarcation between Congregationalism and Presbyterianism, as two very different systems of church government. And that effort was successful. The influence of his book on the ecclesiastical polity of the Congregational churches of Connecticut was decisive and permanent. Connecticut Congregationalism, in all its essential elements, will be found in Hooker’s “Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline.”

There has ever been good agreement between this system of ecclesiastical polity, as essentially republican, and the civil constitution of Connecticut. The men who sought religious liberty there, and formed the Churches on the broad basis of that freedom which belongs to Christian men,

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<sup>1</sup> Mather, I, 316.

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really laid the foundation of the civil State, when they laid those of the Churches.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, Christian men in the Congregational denomination in Connecticut — and the same is true throughout New England, and in our Western Churches of the same order — are never perplexed by having to act upon one system in the Church, and another in civil society. They are perfectly at home in both spheres of action. Every Congregational Christian's rights and privileges and duties are the same, properly considered, in the one as in the other. And where Congregational polity has prevalence, there need be no fear of a "union between Church and State."

What Mr. Hooker did to promote a scriptural and just ecclesiastical polity, he also did to promote a sound and orthodox faith. His published writings — though but in small proportion theological, in the technical use of the term — were thoroughly after the Puritan model, as to doctrines. The history of the Confessions of Faith, adopted by the Congregational Churches of Connecticut, gives evidence that the same individual instrumentality which had been concerned in modeling their polity, was also employed in settling their articles of religious belief. In more recent times, if changes have been made in the articles of any Churches in New England, by the substitution of feeble, unmeaning, or doubtful generalities — in order to satisfy minds that are reluctant to receive a plainspoken New Testament orthodoxy — still, a good proportion of the Churches, it is believed, have adhered to the Puritan faith, by preserving inviolate the "form of doctrine" drawn from the "sure word," and received and preached by such men as Thomas Hooker.

This "soundness in the faith" prepared Mr. Hooker and his brethren in the New England colonies, to protest fearlessly and faithfully, against heresy in any and every form. Therefore, when Antinomianism found its way into Massachusetts, Hooker and Davenport as representatives from the Churches in the Colonies of Connecticut and New Haven, in the first general council in New England, bore their testimony against error, with the intrepidity and fidelity which becomes lovers of "the truth of Christ." <sup>2</sup>

Thus this father in the early Churches of Connecticut, assisted in laying deep and broad the foundations of ecclesiastical order, of a pure faith, of spiritual prosperity, and of a healthful, moral, and civil condition in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Hooker's influence and usefulness, however, were not confined within the bounds of the Connecticut Colonies. He appears to have been regarded as the common property of the Churches in all the New England Colonies at that period. He was frequently present in the ecclesiastical assemblies of the confederacy, as well as in those of his own colony and of others in his immediate vicinity. He was relied upon for aid in the promotion of all the great objects which were undertaken for the commonweal of the Churches; especially where difficulties were to be adjusted, and a wise and safe direction was to be given to the religious action of the Churches and the ministry. He was one of the Moderators of the first New England Synod, held at Cambridge, for the examination of certain erroneous opinions which had been set forth by Mr. Wheelwright and Mrs. Hutchinson, to the disturbance of the peace of the Churches in Massachusetts Bay. Accompanied by other ministers from the colonies of Connecticut, he came to Boston several days previous to the assembling of the Synod. And as the result of consultation, with the consent of the magistrates, a day was appointed to be kept by all the Churches as a day of humiliation.<sup>3</sup> He was also active during that time, in endeavors to bring about a reconciliation between Mr. Cotton, Mr. Wheelwright, and Mr. Wilson, apparently in reference to some personal matters. And here is a fact which affords additional presumptive evidence against Robertson's imputation upon Hooker's motives in moving to Connecticut, noticed in a previous chapter. If Cotton and Hooker could not live together in Massachusetts on account of unfriendly rivalry and jealousy, then it

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<sup>1</sup> Trumbull's Hist. I, 282.

<sup>2</sup> Trumbull's Hist. Conn., I, 288, 289.

<sup>3</sup> Savage's *Winthrop*, I, 285-341; Mass. Hist. Coll., IX, 32; XV, 298.



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does not seem very probable that Hooker would have been called from Connecticut to officiate as a peacemaker between Cotton and his neighbors.

The respect for Mr. Hooker by a large number of great and good men in England, and their confidence in his soundness in faith, and in his fidelity to the cause of truth and liberty on both sides of the Atlantic, were indicated by the invitation he received — together with Mr. Cotton and Mr. Davenport — to be a member of that memorable body, the Westminster Assembly of Divines, convened in London in the year 1642. This passage in the history of the calling of an Assembly which gave to the Christian world those admirable digests of religious faith and practice — *the Larger and Shorter Westminster Catechism* — will doubtless interest the reader. This not only affords proof of the regard in which Hooker, Cotton, and Davenport were held in England, but also indicates who were the prominent men in calling that assembly of divines.<sup>1</sup>

The reception of these invitations to the Westminster Assembly, occasioned a meeting of the magistrates and ministers of Massachusetts who were nearest Boston, for consultation and advice. Hutchinson remarks,

“Most of them were of the opinion that it was a call of God. Mr. Davenport was inclined to go; but his church were unwilling to release him, being at that time their only minister. Mr. Cotton thought it a clear call, and would have undertaken the voyage if the others would have gone with him. Mr. Hooker did not like the business, and did not think it a sufficient call to go a thousand leagues to confer about matters of church government.”

It seems that the communications received from England on this subject, did not give intimations of the objects of the convocation, that were sufficiently definite. And this left upon the mind of Mr. Hooker, in particular, the impression that “matters of church government” were to be the principal, if not the only subject of consideration. Aware of the probability that the Presbyterian preferences of the English members of the Assembly would prevail, he doubtless preferred not to come into collision on that subject with his brethren there — fearing that he and his New England brethren would stand alone as the advocates of Congregationalism. Ever since he came to New England, he had advocated intelligently and conscientiously for the principles of pure Congregationalism. And doubtless he was engaged at this time, in maturing his “Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline,” as the result of prayerful and deliberate study of the Scriptures. It was quite natural, then, that he should feel reluctant to cross the Atlantic and go directly into a controversy with his English brethren on the subject of Church Polity — without any hope of changing the opinions of the Presbyterian members of the Assembly; and being quite certain that he would not change his own for theirs. His refusal to accept the invitation for himself, therefore, is not to be regarded as by any means unfraternal in itself; but as a measure in which he was acting upon the wise man’s advice, to “leave off contention before it is meddled with;” and in which he should also keep himself unembarrassed in his future advocacy of Congregationalism at home.

Apart from these reasons, and with, our eyes upon that admirable digest of faith and practice, the Westminster Catechism drawn up by that Assembly, and which every Orthodox Congregationalist as well as Presbyterian, in America, approves and loves at this day, we wish it could be said that, in framing that instrument, three such men as Hooker, Cotton, and Davenport from New England, had borne a part. As it is, however, we rejoice that the Westminster Catechism constitutes such a bond of faith and affection as it surely does, between the Congregational and the Presbyterian churches of America. This fact testifies to the world that there are two distinct Christian denominations who, while they differ in their church polity, are “one and indivisible” with respect to their faith in “the gospel of God our Savior.”

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<sup>1</sup> For the copy of the document accompanying the letter of invitation to the three men, see Appendix B.

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Mr. Hooker shared largely with his brethren of the New England ministry, the regard of the churches. This is indicated by the evidence of affection, veneration, and delight in his preaching, which his visits to Massachusetts always elicited. Whenever *the old pastor of Newton* was to preach in that vicinity, the gathering of a crowded and attentive assembly was quite certain. He was one of those “ministers of Christ” towards whom the feelings of the true people of God literally fulfilled that apostolic injunction, “to esteem them very highly in love, for their work’s sake.” Nor is there any affection felt in human hearts, on this side of heaven, which is warmer, holier, or more elevated than that which is borne by true Christians towards the “good and faithful servant” of the Lord Jesus, by whom they have been fed with the good and precious word of divine grace — the pious and eloquent preacher who has “Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.”<sup>1</sup>

But “the time drew near that Israel must die.” The devoted and heavenly-minded Christian, the “able minister of the New Testament,” the planter of churches, the founder of a state, the guardian of the liberties of both the church and the state, the “ambassador for Christ” who had “borne and had patience, and for Christ’s name’s sake had labored and had not fainted” — he who had been so rich a blessing to the children of God in “the fatherland,” and to the infant churches of New England — was about to be called home to his rest and his reward. Not that he had become too old to labor longer in the service of Christ, for he was yet many years short of “three-score and ten;” nor that he was prematurely worn out, for we find no intimation that his health, subsequent to his residence in Holland, was ever impaired. The messenger of death finally appeared in a violent epidemic disease, which in a brief space accomplished its work upon the strong man in the midst of his days.

Of this epidemic, and of the death of Mr. Hooker as one of its victims, Governor Winthrop makes the following record:

“An epidemic sickness was through the country, among Indians and English, French and Dutch. It took them like a cold, and a light fever with it. Those who bled or used cooling drinks died; those who took comfortable things, for the most part recovered in few days. A special providence of God appeared in this, for not a family, nor but few persons escaping it, had it brought all so weak as it did some, and continued for so long, that our hay and corn had been lost for lack of help. But such was the mercy of God to his people, that few died, not above forty or fifty in Massachusetts, and near as many at Connecticut. But that which made the stroke more sensible and grievous, both to them and to all the country, was the death of that faithful servant of the Lord, Mr. Thomas Hooker, pastor of the church in Hartford, who for piety, prudence, wisdom, zeal, learning, and what else might make him serviceable in the place and time he lived in, might be compared with men of greatest note; and he needs no other praise. The fruits of his labors in both Englands will preserve an honorable and happy remembrance of him forever.”<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Hooker had been known to some of his friends to say that, “he would esteem it a favor from God, if he might live no longer than he should be able to hold up lively in the work of his place; and that when the time of his departure should come, God would shorten the time.” His wish was granted. It appeared that his passage from his pulpit to his grave and to heaven, was in divine mercy, appointed to be short. The history of his last days will be best given in the language of one who seems to have delighted to record the histories of the good men of “the former times,” and of their triumphant departures “to be with Christ.”<sup>3</sup>

“Some of his most observant hearers noticed an astonishing cloud in his congregation, the last Lord’s day of his public ministry, when he administered the Lord’s supper among them; and a most unaccountable heaviness and sleepiness, even of the most watchful Christians of the place;

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<sup>1</sup> From *The Deserted Village*, a poem by Oliver Goldsmith, that dates back to 1770.

<sup>2</sup> Winthrop’s Hist. of New Eng., II, 810.

<sup>3</sup> See Mather’s Magnalia.

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not unlike the drowsiness of the disciples when our Lord was going to die; for which one of the elders publicly rebuked them. When those devout people afterwards perceived that this was the last sermon and sacrament in which they were to have the presence of their pastor with them, 'tis inexpressible, how much they bewailed their inattentiveness to his farewell dispensations. And some of them could enjoy no peace in their own souls, until they had obtained leave of the elders to confess before the whole congregation, with many tears, that inadvertency.

"In the time of his sickness he did not say much to the standers-by; but being asked that he utter his apprehensions about some important things, especially about the state of New England, he answered, 'I do not have that work to do now; I have already declared the counsel of the Lord.' When one who stood weeping by his bedside said to him, 'Sir, you are going to receive the reward of all your labors,' he replied, '*Brother, I am going to receive mercy.*' At last he closed his eyes with his own hands, and gently stroking his own forehead, with a smile on his countenance, he gave a little groan. And so expired his blessed soul into the arms of his fellow servants, the holy angels, on July 7, 1647. In which last hours, the glorious peace of soul which he had enjoyed without any interruption for near thirty years together, so gloriously accompanied him, that a worthy spectator, writing to Mr. Cotton a relation of it, made this reflection: 'Truly, sir, the sight of his death will make me have more pleasant thoughts of death than I ever yet had in my life.'"

On July 19, 1647, Mr. Stone, his beloved associate in the ministry of the church at Hartford, writes to Mr. Thomas Shepard:

"To his dear Brother, Mr. Thomas Shepard, Pastor of the church at Cambridge."

"Dearest Brother: "God brought us safely to Hartford; but when I came here, God presented to me a sad spectacle. Mr. Hooker looked like a dying man. God refused to hear our prayers for him, but took him from us, July 7, a little before sunset. Our sun is set, our light is eclipsed, our joy is darkened. We remember now in the day of our calamity, the pleasant things we enjoyed in former times. His spirits and head were so oppressed with the disease, that he was not able to express much to us in his sickness. But he had expressed to Mr. Goodwin, before my return, that his peace was made in heaven, and had continued 30 years without alteration. He was above Satan. 'Mark the upright man, for the end of that man is peace!' He lived a most blameless life. I think his greatest enemies cannot charge him. He has done much work for Christ, and now rests from his labor, and his works follow him. But our loss is great, and bitter. *My* loss is bitter. I gave thanks to my God daily for his help; and no man in the world but myself, knows what a friend he has been to me. As his abilities were great, so his love and faithfulness were very great. I can never look to have the like fellow officer in his place. There are but few such men in the world. I will say no more, lest I seem to exceed. It is an extreme difficulty to me to know how to behave myself under the hand of God which strikes me in a special manner. Pray for me in this distress: for I am astonished at this amazing providence. I cannot complain of God, who 'does all things well.' The Lord show me what his mind is, that I may be rightly affected with this loss. I pray suggest what you think may be the mind of God in it.

"Mrs. Hooker was taken with the same sickness that night when I came to Hartford, and was very near death. She is yet weak, but I hope recovering. It would have been a great aggravation of our misery if God had blotted out that pleasant family all at once."— "My wife is sick and weak; I am not well; I am troubled with heat and faintness. Last night I had some rest, but the night before I could not sleep all night, only slumber and dream. God gives me warning to prepare for my change. The glorious presence of Christ in heaven is much better than life. We wait for that blessed hope. If it had not been for this occasion, I know not whether I could have

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written anything at this time, being unfit to write. We will do what we can to prepare Mr. Hooker's answer to Rutherford,<sup>1</sup> that it may be sent before winter."

fr: t: Sam: Stone"

When Mr. Hooker had departed, it was felt, throughout New England, that a strong and majestic pillar had been removed from the church and from the state. But not less was it also felt, that a public benefactor, and a "good and faithful servant" of God had taken his upward flight, to enter into the rest and holiness and bliss of heaven, and to receive at the hands of "the Lord, the righteous Judge," a "crown of righteousness."

His age was 61 years. His death took place on the anniversary of his birth. He died "in his full strength," not having reached the period when infirmities impair usefulness, and years weigh down the man into the tomb. Thus it often is, in the providence of God, that the men who appear in the midst of life and usefulness, and whose continuance seems most desirable, are taken away as in a moment, and the church are left in tears.

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<sup>1</sup> Survey of Church Discipline.

## Chapter 6. His Character.

Estimate of Mr. Hooker's character in various points. Rank in the esteem of his brethren in the ministry. Prayerfulness. Humility, and its exemplifications. Disinterestedness. Solicitude on the dangers of the churches. Natural temper and spirit. Self-control. Treatment of errors, and of those with whom he was necessarily in controversy. Intercourse with his brethren of the ministry. Kind interest in young ministers. Generosity to those in need. Character as a pastor and administrator of church government. Admission of members to the church. Social character and intercourse.

IN considering the character of Mr. Hooker, as separate from the history of his life, and in a more general view, it will be proper that we look at the estimation in which he was held, and the rank assigned him by his brethren in the Christian ministry, and by those whom he served in the office of pastor and spiritual guide. He appears to have been a man, with respect to his excellence and eminence in various important points of character, whom the great and good men of his own time were united in bearing testimony.

The author of *Magnalia Americana* gives a testimony of several, principally his contemporaries:

"Mr. Henry Whitfield, having spent many years in studying books, at length took two or three years to study men. And in pursuance of this design, having acquainted himself with the most considerable divines of England, at last fell into the acquaintance of Mr. Hooker; concerning whom he afterwards gave this testimony — 'that he hadn't thought there had been such a man on earth; a man in whom there shone so many excellencies as were in this incomparable Hooker; a man in whom learning and wisdom were so tempered with zeal, holiness, and watchfulness'"

His pupil, Mr. Ash, gave this opinion concerning him: "For his great abilities and glorious services, both in this and the other England, he deserves a place in the first rank of those whose lives are lately recorded." Mr. Ezekiel Rogers, another of his contemporaries, spoke of him as a "rich pearl" possessed by America. Mr. Elisha Corlet of Cambridge, England, who was an early teacher of many of the worthy men who came to this country for the sake of "faith and a good conscience," celebrated his virtues in a Latin elegy, breathing alike the friendship of the refined scholar, and the affectionate admiration of the Christian brother. Increase Mather, in his preface to the lives of Cotton, Norton, Wilson, Davenport, and Hooker, remarks of the latter, in his quaint style: "It is a great pity that no more can be collected of the memorables relating to so good and so great a man as he was; one whom Connecticut never did, and perhaps never will see a greater person... It was a black day to New England when that great light was removed."

Mr. Hooker had spent some time in Holland with the learned and able Dr. William Ames, the well-known author of "Medulla Theologiae." He had assisted him in the preparation of his work entitled, "A fresh suit against ceremonies." Such was the regard which Dr. Ames had for him, that notwithstanding his own vast ability and experience, when it came to the narrow of any question about the instituted worship of God, he would still profess himself conquered by Mr. Hooker's reason; declaring that, though he had been acquainted with many scholars of diverse nations, he never met with Mr. Hooker's equal, either for preaching or disputing."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Cotton, in his preface to Mr. Norton's answer to Apollonius, says of Mr. Hooker, "Dominatur in Concionibus." And in an elegy upon his death, he thus writes of him:

"'Twas of Geneva's worthies said, with wonder,  
(Those worthies three) *Farel* was wont to thunder:  
*Viret* like rain or tender grass to shower,  
But *Calvin*, lively oracles to pour.  
All these in Hooker's spirit did remain,  
A son of thunder and a shower of rain;

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<sup>1</sup> Mather, I, 808.

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A pourer forth of lively oracles;  
In saving souls, the sum of miracles”

The estimation in which he was held by his church and people, is learned from passages in an epistle prefatory to his *Survey of Church Discipline*, published after his decease, signed by Edward Hopkins and William Goodwin:

“We have for many years lived under God’s shadow, been fed with the delicacies of his house, enjoyed the full improvement of the large abilities of faithful watchmen and overseers for our good, to whom our comforts and welfare in every kind have been precious. But the only wise God, for our great unworthiness, has lately made a sad breach upon us, by the death of our most dear pastor, whereby our glory is much eclipsed, our comforts not a little impaired, and our fears justly multiplied. The stroke is direful and shocking, when such a stake is taken out of the hedge, such a pillar from the house, such a pastor from his flock, in such a time and place as this.

“It is not our purpose, nor is it suitable to our condition, to lay out the breadth of the excellencies with which, through the abundant grace of the Lord, he was enriched and fitted for the service of his great name — or if we were willing to improve ourselves in that way, to have our pens receive an anointing for such employment. What we express is only to put you and ourselves in mind of the invaluable loss we have sustained, that our hearts being deeply and duly affected under that sad afflicting providence, we may look up to the Holy One of Israel our Redeemer, who teaches to profit, that instruction may be sealed up to us thereby.”

“He was (as you well know) one of a thousand whose diligence and unweariedness, besides his other endowments in the work committed to him, was almost beyond compare. He revealed the whole counsel of the Lord to us, kept nothing back, dividing the word aright. His care was of the strong and weak, sheep and lambs, to give a portion to each in due season; delighting in holy administrations, which were held out by him in much beauty and glory. His Master found him in this work, and so called him to enter into His glory. Some of you are not ignorant with what strength of importunity he was drawn to the present service, and with what fear and care he attended it. The weight and difficulty of the work was duly apprehended by him, and he looked upon it as somewhat unsuitable to a pastor whose head and heart and hands were full of the employments of his proper place.

“Besides, his spirit most delighted in the search of the mystery of Christ, in the ‘unsearchable riches’ of it, and the work and method of the Spirit in the communication of that to the soul for its everlasting welfare; some discovery of this may hereafter be presented to the world, as the Lord gives liberty and opportunity.

“Such strength of parts, clothed with humility, such clear and high apprehensions of the things of God, with a ready, cheerful, condescending to the infirmities of the weak (which was his daily study and practice), are not often to be found among the sons of men, nor yet the sons of God in this world”

The man who took such a hold on the affections of both ministers and private Christians in the ranks of the church, and to whom was awarded so high a place in their respect and confidence, must have been a minister of no ordinary worth. Mr. Hooker’s devotional habits were of an exemplary character.

“He was a man of prayer, which was indeed a ready way to become a man of God. He would say that ‘prayer was the principal part of a minister’s work; it was this by which he was to carry on the rest.’ — Accordingly, he still devoted one day in a month to private prayer with fasting before the Lord, besides the public fasts which often occurred to him. He would say that such extraordinary favors as the life of religion and the power of godliness, must be preserved by the frequent use of such extraordinary means as prayer with fasting; and that, if professors grow

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negligent of these means, iniquity will abound, and the 'love of many grow cold.' Nevertheless, in the duty of prayer, he affected strength rather than length. And though he didn't have so much variety in his public *praying* as in his public *preaching*, yet he always had a seasonable respect to present occasions. And it was observed that his prayer was usually like Jacob's ladder, in which the nearer he came to the end, the nearer he drew to heaven. And he grew into such rapturous pleadings with God, and praisings of God, that it made some to say that, like the master of the feast, he reserved the best wine until the last. Nor was the wonderful success of his prayers upon special concerns unobserved by the whole colony, who reckoned him the Moses who turned away the wrath of God from them, and obtained a blast from heaven upon the Indians, by his uplifted hands, in those remarkable deliverances which they sometimes experienced. It was very particularly observed when there was a battle to be fought between the Narragansett and Mohegan Indians in the year 1643. The Narragansett Indians had plotted the ruin of the English, but the Mohegan Indians were confederated with us. And a war now going on between those two nations, much notice was taken of the prevailing importunity with which Mr. Hooker urged the accomplishment of that great promise to the people of God, 'I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you.' And the effect of it was that the Narragansetts wonderfully overthrew the Mohegans, though the former did exceed the latter by three or four to one. Such an Israel at prayer was our Hooker. And this praying pastor was blessed, as indeed such ministers used to be, with a praying people. There fell upon his pious people a 'double portion' of the Spirit which they beheld in him."<sup>1</sup>

Such an example in pastor and people, should not be lost upon the pastors and churches of our own time. The question doubtless demands our serious consideration in these days of multiplied means of religious knowledge and improvement, and of freedom from outward dangers and trials, whether there isn't more dependence on means and their use, than upon prayer for "the Spirit of grace" and upon his power, working for the holiness of the church and the regeneration of the world.

Intimately connected with prayerfulness of spirit in the faithful minister of Christ, is humility. Mr. Hooker was also eminently exemplary in this. In the time of one of his visits to his friends and former people in Massachusetts Bay, he was expected to preach — a pleasure which was naturally much desired by those who had enjoyed his ministrations before his move to Connecticut. Perhaps there was somewhat of idolatry of affection. Mr. Hooker was to preach in the afternoon on May 26, 1639, the Lord's day, at Cambridge. A great assembly was gathered from other congregations, attracted by his fame as a preacher; among them was the governor of the colony. "When he came to preach (Winthrop says), having gone on with much strength of voice and intention of spirit about a quarter of an hour, he found himself so unaccountably at a loss, that after some shattered and broken attempts to proceed, he made a full stop, saying to the assembly, that 'every thing which he would have spoken was taken out of his mouth, and out of his mind also.' Therefore he desired them to sing a psalm, while he withdrew about half an hour from them. Returning then to the congregation, he preached a most admirable sermon, in which he held them for two hours together, in an extraordinary strain, both of pertinency and vivacity."<sup>2</sup>

Wounded pride, in a man of less grace than Mr. Hooker, would have laid to heart such an arrest of thought and of eloquence, and would have attempted explanations and palliations, or would have endeavored to account for such a mortifying failure by blaming the weather, or the confined air of a crowded assembly, or the state of his health. He took no such view of the matter. On an allusion by some of his friends afterward, to the divine withdrawal of assistance from him, he replied, with the humility which became a preacher of the grace and duty of humility:

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<sup>1</sup> Magnalia, I, 312.

<sup>2</sup> Magnalia, I, 311.

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“We daily confess that we have nothing, and can do nothing, without Christ. And what if Christ makes this manifest in us and on us, before our congregations? What remains but that we be humbly contented? And what manner of discouragement is there in all this?”

This is an admirable piece of instruction. And let the minister of the gospel who ever finds himself mortified in the pulpit, by failure to execute his own conceptions of his subject and of his wishes, in preaching, and to please his hearers, wisely and humbly consider how easy it is, aye, and how necessary it may be, also, for “the Master” to strip him of pride and self; to make him ashamed, even “in the assembly of the people,” that he may learn not to trust in his preparations, his powers of reasoning, rhetoric, or elocution, but to rely upon the aids of the Spirit of grace and truth.

Mr. Hooker, notwithstanding his intellectual strength and eminence, and his great reputation, “was of a very condescending spirit, not only towards his brethren in the ministry, but also towards the humblest of any Christians whatsoever. He was very willing to sacrifice his own apprehensions, to the convincing reason of another man, and very ready to acknowledge any mistake or failing in himself.”<sup>1</sup>

With such humility and habits of condescension, it is natural to look for disinterestedness. This trait of character was very prominent in Mr. Hooker. “He was born to serve many.” He industriously and unceasingly sought to serve the best interests of his fellow men. It didn’t matter where his services were needed; whether in the duties of an instructor and preacher in Emmanuel College, at Cambridge; or of a lecturer in Chelmsford; or of the more private duties of an instructor of youth at Little Haddow; or of a private counselor and helper of his brethren in the ministry, for their spiritual good, after the seal of the bishop’s interdiction was upon his own lips as a preacher; or whether driven by persecution to Holland, he was assisting the labors of Paget at Amsterdam, or of Forbes at Delft, or of Ames at Rotterdam; or whether he was preaching to a company of Puritans in the middle of the Atlantic, or to a Church of pilgrims at Newtown, or to a handful of the children of God in the wilderness at Hartford. His motto seemed to be, everywhere, and at all times, “I seek not yours; but you... Indeed, I will very gladly spend and be spent for you.”

He also ever acted on the same principle, when called to take part in affairs of public, civil, and personal interest. He was always ready to serve as a counselor, whether in endeavoring to aid in adjusting the difficulties arising out of the opinions and movements of Roger Williams; or in bringing about a reconciliation between Governor Winthrop and the deputy, Mr. Dudley; or between Cotton, Wheelwright, and Wilson; or in the great work of planning the New England Confederacy; or in assisting the civil fathers of the Connecticut Colonies in their effort to furnish sound legislation. He was a man of a large heart, and of superiority to selfishly seeking his own advantage, as separate from the public weal, and ever prepared for self-sacrifice. He “consulted not with flesh and blood,” but inquired for duty, for the true interests of the Churches, the welfare of the infant State; and beyond all, for the glory of his God and Father in heaven. A man of such a spirit does not need to be seated on a throne, or dwell in a palace, in order to be truly honored. He is always great in the scene of duty and usefulness. And in his influence on society, both civil and religious, he makes himself felt everywhere, to good purpose.

Mr. Hooker’s love for the kingdom and honor of Christ made him feel tenderly solicitous, relative to the spiritual dangers of the Churches planted in this country, in the enjoyment of so much liberty, quiet, and outward prosperity.

“He said that adversity had slain its thousands; but prosperity would slay its ten thousands. He feared that those who had been lively Christians in the fire of persecution, would soon become cold in the midst of universal peace — except some few, whom God, by sharp trials, would keep in a faithful, watchful, humble, praying frame. But under these apprehensions, it was his own

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<sup>1</sup> Magnalia, I, 313.



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endeavor to beware of abating his own first love.” “One of his predictions was that God would punish the wanton spirit of the professors in this country, with a sad lack of able men in all orders. Another was that in certain places, of great light sinned against, there would break forth such horrible sins as would be to the amazement of the world.” “In his discourses he would frequently intermix most affectionate warnings of the declensions which would quickly befall the Churches of New England.”<sup>1</sup>

“He that rules his spirit is greater than he that takes a city,” writes the wise man. Mr. Hooker illustrated this truth, in his powerful self-control. Mr. Henry Whitfield remarked of him, that “he had the best command of his own spirit, which he ever saw in any man, whatsoever. For though he was a man of a choleric disposition, and had a mighty vigor and fervor of spirit; which as occasion served, was wondrously useful to him; yet he had ordinarily as much government of his choler, as a man has of a mastiff dog on a chain: he could let out his dog, and pull in his dog as he pleased.”

When he had erred in spirit and words, under apparent provocation, he was above that smallness of soul, and that disingenuousness, which would descend to the meanness of denying his fault. But he was ready to make the most frank acknowledgment of it to anyone, however humble, whom he had injured by the expression of his feelings. An incident will illustrate this remark. Some damage had been done to one of his neighbors. Mr. Hooker, shortly after, meeting with an unlucky boy, who had the reputation of being a rogue, and believing him to be the offender, fell to chiding the boy, as the perpetrator of the mischief which had excited his indignation. “The boy denied it; and Mr. Hooker still went on in an angry manner charging him with it. Whereupon the boy said, ‘Sir, I see you are in a passion, I’ll say no more to you;’ and so he ran away. Mr. Hooker, on further inquiry, not finding that the boy could be proved guilty, sent for him. Having first, by a calm question, given the boy an opportunity to renew his denial of the fact, he said to him, ‘Since I cannot prove to the contrary, I am bound to believe — and I do believe — what you say.’ And then he added, ‘Indeed I was in a passion when I spoke to you before. It was my sin, and it is my shame, and I am truly sorry for it; and I hope in God I will be more watchful hereafter.’ So giving him some good counsel, the poor lad went away extremely affected with such a carriage in so good a man. And it proved an occasion of good to the soul of the lad all his days.”<sup>2</sup>

With such habits of self-control, and with a spirit so ruled by the gospel of Christ; as might be expected, he was no angry polemic when controversy for truth and righteousness were necessary. His pulpit was no place for angry assaults upon the errors which were abroad. Yet he stood there, always, firm and uncompromising, as a preacher of the truth of Christ.” The careful examiner of his published writings (which in important measure constituted the substance of his preaching) will find him a truly powerful assailant of sin and sinners of all sorts. He was a perfect “Boanerges,” when it was demanded by his subject and its bearings on the consciences and conduct of men. But who needs to be taught the difference between such preaching and that species of pulpit pugilism sometimes witnessed, in which “the old man” in the preacher, grapples with “the old man” in the hearer, from pure fondness for fighting?

We have already seen, that when Mr. Hooker was in the field of controversy, he was there, not from his own choice or seeking, but in obedience to the summons of duty. And yet, he bore no ill-will to a combatant. He could afterward and always meet him, out of the field of controversy, with all the kindness and courtesy of a Christian and a friend. His public dispute with Roger Williams was probably as exciting and difficult as any controversy in which he was engaged at any time. But tradition relates that years afterward when they met accidentally, Mr. Hooker showed towards his former antagonist, the kindness of friendship, entirely uninfluenced by anything which had

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<sup>1</sup> Mather, I. 312, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Magnalia, I. 313.

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passed between them as controversialists — and doubtless his feelings were reciprocated by Mr. Williams. Mr. Hooker seems to have been one of those men who had no love for contention; and with whom, for this reason, it was very difficult for other men to contend. There is no harder work on earth than to quarrel with a good man who has a good temper. All the fighting will have to be done on one side.

The intercourse of Mr. Hooker with his brethren of the ministry was marked with great cordiality and affection. He loved, as brothers, his fellow-laborers in “the work of Christ.” Sometimes he preached his way directly into the hearts of his brethren; and at other times he won their affection by the freedom and affection of private intercourse. His first sermon at Delft, in Holland — to which he had fled from persecution at home — was on the text Phi 1.29, “For to you it is given on behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him; but also to suffer for his sake.” In this sermon, it would seem that he made his way into the heart of good Mr. Forbes. For “after that sermon, Mr. Forbes manifested a strong desire to enjoy the fellowship of Mr. Hooker in the work of the gospel, which he did for the space of about two years; in all that time they lived so like brethren, that an observer might say of them, as it was said of Basil and Nazianzen, ‘They were but one soul in two bodies.’ And if they had been apart for any little while, they still met with such friendly and joyful congratulations, as testified to a most affectionate satisfaction in each other’s company.”<sup>1</sup> So likewise had it been in his previous residence at Chelmsford, associated with Mr. Mitchell; although there was considerable disparity in the talents of the two men, their labors together were “in a most comfortable amity.”<sup>2</sup>

Such relationships in the work of the ministry, are often attended with considerable delicacy and difficulty. But there are examples such as we just mentioned, in sufficient numbers to prove that it is practicable for colleagues in the ministry of one church, to live in entire harmony and affection. Mr. Stone’s Letter shows this to be true in his and Mr. Hooker’s experience.

Mr. Hooker delighted to bear honorable testimony to the excellence and eminence of his brethren. No feelings of jealous rivalry seemed to make him reserved in speaking of their worth. “*My brother Mather is a mighty man,*” he said of Mr. Richard Mather, the ancestor of that family and line of useful men by that name. Mr. Rogers of Dedham, England, was in his estimate, and as he expressed himself, “*the prince of all preachers.*” And respecting the intellectual power and productions of his friend, Dr. Ames, he expressed himself in a manner equally full and honorable.

He was also worthy of imitation in the kind interest he was accustomed to take in his younger brethren, especially those who were just entering upon the arduous duties of the sacred office. He was a wise and affectionate counsellor to them, as circumstances required. Thomas Shepard gives an illustration of this remark, from his own experience. The question under consideration was whether Mr. Shepard would do wisely to accept a Lectureship proposed to him in Cogshall, Essex, England. “Most of the ministers were for it, because it was a great town, and they didn’t know any place that desired it but they. Only Mr. Hooker objected to my going there. For my being but young and inexperienced, and there being an old but sly and malicious minister in that place, who seemed to give way to having the lectureship there. He therefore said it was dangerous for little birds to build under the nests of old ravens and kites.”<sup>3</sup> This advice kept Mr. Shepard from going to Cogshall, and from difficulty there, to which his experience was doubtless unequal. He was immediately employed at Tarling, in Essex, under circumstances far more favorable both to his ministerial usefulness and comfort. A letter of Mr. Hooker to Mr. Shepard is preserved in the Library of the Massachusetts Historical Society, in relation to some perplexities in his private

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<sup>1</sup> Magnalia, I. 308.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 304.

<sup>3</sup> Life of Shepard, p. 114.

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affairs, which shows that Mr. Hooker readily and deeply sympathized with a junior brother in his troubles, and offered the best advice in his power.

Mr. Hooker's disinterestedness, already described, gave energy to his generosity and his pious liberality. If a widow needed five or ten pounds from his purse, and if he knew of her necessities, she was quite sure to receive it. "His eye affected his heart," and made him ready to do substantial service to the afflicted. Especially if the families of deceased ministers needed his aid, he was ready to impart for their supply. The widow and family of his friend Dr. Ames, who died at Rotterdam, Holland, came to New England to reside. Their house was destroyed by fire; and being reduced to much poverty and affliction, the charitable heart of Mr. Hooker, and others who joined with him, upon advice about it, comfortably provided for them."<sup>1</sup> A scarcity of bread-corn was felt at Southampton (probably on Long Island). Mr. Hooker united with others in sending to the inhabitants, for their supply, a boatload of several hundred bushels of corn. He who loved to break unto men the "bread of eternal life," was also ready, as occasion required, to dispense that bread which is temporal. He had himself been in a remarkable manner a child of Providence. He had been led, protected, and "brought into a large place," in being brought to such a field of usefulness and of Christian privileges as New England. And he held himself ready for all those kind offices to others, which became him as a child of Providence. It doesn't appear that he possessed any property by inheritance from his parents; and yet he had a competence,<sup>2</sup> and manifested a liberality equal to that of many who were wealthier.<sup>3</sup>

It has already been observed that Mr. Hooker, in his native country, and while in the Church of England, was placed in circumstances which constrained him to give much time and study to the subject of Ecclesiastical Polity; and in this country, to employ his pen upon the same subject. Allusion is made here again to this circumstance, preparatory to a few remarks on Mr. Hooker's character as a pastor and administrator of the government of the church.

With all his study of the subject of church government, Mr. Hooker was as far as possible from the love of making laws for Christ's house, for the simple pleasure of administering them, as an exhibition of authority and power. So far as the treatment of offences was concerned, he evidently regarded ecclesiastical law in the light of a system of provisions for exigencies, to which resort might be had when advice, persuasion, and appeals to conscience, in any of the members of the church, had been tried and found insufficient. He relied upon the influence of sound ecclesiastical law, united with kind pastoral influence, as preventive of evil, and anticipating the necessity of disciplinary measures. "He was greatly troubled at the too frequent censures in some other churches. And he would say, 'Church censures are things with which neither we nor our fathers have been acquainted in the practice of them; and therefore the utmost circumspection is needed, so that we don't spoil the ordinances of God by our management of it.'"<sup>4</sup> A fact will illustrate the importance of his views and his practice on this subject. During all the years of his pastorship of the Church in Hartford, there occurred *but two cases* in which the steps of discipline for offences against Christian law were found necessary.

"He was very careful to have everything done with Christian moderation and unanimity. Therefore, he would have nothing publicly propounded to the brethren of the church, except what had first been privately prepared by the elders,"<sup>5</sup> He relied much, and not in vain, upon mutual, clear and good understanding among the members of the church. And he promoted this in the friendly interchange of views on points of difficulty, *previously*, so as to ensure unity of opinion

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<sup>1</sup> Magnalia, I. 309.

<sup>2</sup> *Competence*: a means of income.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Hooker's estate was estimated at £1336.15; his Library at £800.

<sup>4</sup> Magnalia, I. 317.

<sup>5</sup> Magnalia, I, 316, 317.

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and action when the brethren came together. He never pushed a vote, in the face of agitated and conflicting feelings, but would delay till another meeting. Thus opportunity for fraternal consultation and union of minds might prepare the church to act with deliberation and harmony. His own kind and prudent aid to the minds of the brethren of the church, on points which were attended with difficulty, and respecting which there was liability to division in sentiment and action, seems to have been instrumental in reconciling differing minds, and relieving perplexities relative to the course of action proper to be pursued when assembled.

The important and responsible work of examining candidates for admission to membership and communion in ordinances, he conducted with great care. He appears to have acted, and taught his church to act, in this important department of duty, upon the principle that profession of religion, to be safe, must be attested as sincere, by the credible exhibition of the Scripture evidences of a renewed heart, and by a holy manner of life, in accordance with the precepts of the gospel. He had seen the deep corruption of the national church of his native land, through the admission of multitudes to membership and ordinances, in disregard of their apparent utter destitution of religion. Thus he had been most solemnly taught the necessity of watching for the *purity* of the church, by diligently and carefully guarding the *door of admission* into the church.

Little is known of the social character of Mr. Hooker beyond what appears in such notices as the following: "In conversation he was pleasant and entertaining, but always grave. He was affable, and condescending, and charitable. Yet his appearance and conduct were with such becoming majesty, authority and prudence, that he could do more with a word or a look, than other men would do with a severe discipline."<sup>1</sup>

This imperfect sketch of Mr. Hooker's character, in some of its principal features, may properly be closed with a reference to the general views of him given by a recent New England historian, who appears to have been a close and accurate student of the characters of American worthies. They indicate the high estimate formed of Mr. Hooker, as prominent among great and good men. After having described Haynes and Cotton, in the grand outlines of their characters, and placing them high among the worthies of their day, this historian proceeds:

"Hooker was of vast endowments, a strong will, and an energetic mind; ingenuous in his temper, and open in his professions; trained to benevolence by the discipline of affliction; versed in tolerance by his refuge in Holland; choleric, yet gentle in his affections; firm in his faith, yet readily yielding to the power of reason; the peer of the reformers, without their harshness; the devoted apostle to the humble and the poor; severe towards the proud; mild in his soothings of a wounded spirit; glowing with the raptures of devotion, and kindling with the messages of redeeming love; his eye, voice, gesture and whole frame animate with the living vigor of heartfelt religion; public spirited and lavishly charitable; and though persecutions and banishments had awaited him, as one wave follows another, he was ever serenely blessed with 'a glorious peace of soul;' fixed in his trust in Providence and in his adhesion to that cause of advancing civilization which he cherished always, even while it remained a mystery to him. This was someone whom, for his abilities and services, his contemporaries placed 'in the first rank' of men; praising him as the one rich pearl with which Europe more than repaid America for the treasures from her coast."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Holmes' Hist. Camb., p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Bancroft's History of the United States, vol. I., pp. 863, 864.

## Chapter 7. His Writings.

Works of Mr. Hooker — reasons for a particular account of them. Titles of his principal works. Surreptitious manner of first publication. Christ his great theme. Theology. Treatment of the experiences of the soul. Instructions to those in an unregenerate state. Instructions to the regenerate; — on Christian duties — Christian privileges — Christian trials — Christian encouragements. Discrimination in characters. Views of the Christian ministry.

THE present and a following chapter will be devoted to a particular account of the writings of Mr. Hooker, for the following reasons. They are, in some points, peculiar in their character, as respects many of the subjects of which they treat, and the manner in which those subjects are treated; and as compared with the writings of his time. They will assist in understanding the true ground of the reputation, which both Puritan and civil history report of his character as a public religious instructor. They are very little known among us, with the exception of one small tractate, none of them having been republished in this country. And of those published in England, none have been printed since 1658; and of course, *they* have not been brought into fair contact with the Christian mind of New England. With the exception of the single small work to which allusion has been made, Mr. Hooker's works are now very rarely to be found. They are in detached parts, scattered and very carefully shut up as venerable curiosities, in a very few libraries. They are to be seen and examined, of course, only by those whose interest in Puritan history and character prompts them to take some pains to find and search into them.

So far as this Series is concerned, *Lives of the Chief Fathers of New England*, it is designed for the perusal of ministers. And it is deemed proper to give a particular account of the writings of Mr. Hooker in this volume. With the exception of his work on Church Polity, his published writings obviously contain the substance of many of his sermons. As such, they show the minister of the present time, how a Puritan of more than two hundred years ago, was accustomed to preach. They somewhat help to explain the secret of the wonderful power of his preaching, and that of some of his contemporaries in New England — respecting which, Puritan historians have so unitedly testified.

Also, the rank assigned to Mr. Hooker's writings by different historians who have given general statements of their character, is such as to justify giving a particular account of them. As examples of opinions respecting them, take President Stiles, in his *Literary Diary*. He remarks, "Mr. Bulkley [we suppose Peter Bulkley] was a masterly reasoner in theology. I consider him and President Chauncey, Mr. Hooker, Mr. Norton and Mr. Davenport, as the greatest divines among the first ministers of New England; and equal to the first characters in theology in all Christendom, and in all ages"<sup>1</sup>

"Mr. Hooker's books," says a contemporary writer, "are in great request among the faithful people of Christ"<sup>2</sup> Mr. Hugh Peters, in his "Dying Father's Last Legacy to his Daughter," written in 1660, thus indicates with what order of religious writings he classed those of Mr. Hooker: "Above all things, know that nothing can do you any good without union with Christ the Head; and this can never be till your understanding is enlightened with the want of Christ and his worth. Read Shepard's *Sincere Convert*, Daniel Rogers' *Practical Catechism*, and T. Hooker to this end, with such other helps as you may get"

Again, "But mind in your reading what a sober, plain, unaffected, holy strain is in Dod, Sibbes, Preston, Hooker, Burroughs, etc." And again he speaks of "the love and labors of Mr. Thomas Hooker," by which he had been benefitted.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mass. Hist. Col., XX. 260.

<sup>2</sup> Holmes' Hist. Camb" p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> Hanb., III. 573.

## Chapter 7. His Writings.

The author of “Wonder-working Providence of Zion’s Savior, in New England,” has thrown into quaint, but truthful form, his own estimate of the writings of this Father. He has these lines, among others, apostrophizing him.

“Thy golden tongue and pen Christ caused to be  
The blazing of his golden truths profound.  
You sorry won, it’s Christ wrought this in you,  
What Christ has wrought must needs be very sound.

Then look On Hooker’s works, they follow him  
To grave; this worthy resteth there a while;  
Die shall he not, that has Christ’s warrior been;  
Much less Christ’s truth, clear’d by his people’s toil.

You angel bright, by Christ for light now made,  
Throughout the world as seasoning salt to be,  
Although in dust your body mouldering fade;  
Thy Head’s in heaven, and has a crown for you”<sup>1</sup>

A list of the titles of Mr. Hooker’s published writings will prepare the way for the general purpose of the present chapter. As prepared from the best records to which the writer has found access, they stand as follows:

1. The Soul’s Ingrafting into Christ, published in London, 1637.
2. The Soul’s Implantation; a Treatise, containing The Broken Heart; The Preparation of the Heart; The Soul’s Ingrafting into Christ; Spiritual Love and Joy. London 1637.
3. The Soul’s Preparation for Christ. London 1638.
4. The Unbeliever’s Preparing for Christ, part I. London 1638.
5. The Unbeliever’s Preparing for Christ, part II. London 1638.
6. The Soul’s Exaltation; embracing Union with Christ; Benefits of Union with Christ; and Justification. London 1638.
7. Ten Particular Rules, to be practiced every day, by Converted Christians. London 1641.
8. The Soul’s Vocation, or Effectual Calling to Christ. London 1638.
9. The Faithful Covenanters; a sermon preached at Dedham, in Essex. London 1644.
10. Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline. London 1648.
11. The Saint’s Dignity and Duty. London 1651; containing The Gift of Gifts, or why Christ gave himself; The Blessed Inhabitant, or the Benefit of Christ’s being in Believers; Grace Magnified, or the Privileges of those that are under Grace; Wisdom’s Attendants, or the Voice of Christ to be obeyed; The Activity of Faith, or Abraham’s Imitators.
12. Culpable Ignorance, or the Danger of Ignorance under Means. London 1651.
13. Willful Hardness, or the Means of Grace Abused. London 1651.
14. The Application of Redemption, by the Effectual work of the Word and Spirit of Christ, for the bringing home of lost Sinners to God. London 1657.

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<sup>1</sup> Mass. Hist. Col, XIII. 187.

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15. Christ's Prayer for Believers; a Series of Discourses founded on John 17:20-26. Date supposed, 1657.
16. The Poor Doubting Christian drawn to Christ. London, Boston, 1743. Hartford, 1846. <sup>1</sup>
17. Farewell Sermon to his Parish at Chainsford [Chelmsford], England.

To this catalogue should be added the titles of a few other books by Mr. Hooker, whose existence is learned only from the advertisements of London booksellers, at dates contemporaneous with those already mentioned, from 1633 to 1658:

18. An Exposition of the Lord's Prayer.
19. The Soul's Possession of Christ.
20. The Soul's Justification, Eleven Sermons on 2Cor 5.21.
21. Sermons, on Jdg 10.23; Psa 119.29; Pro 1.28, 29; 2Tim 3.5.
22. The Soul's Humiliation. Luk 15.15-18.
23. Farewell to England. Jer 14.9. (This may be the same as No. 17 above)

The fact appears, incidentally, in some of the prefaces to works of Mr. Hooker, published since his death, that he was averse to authorship; and that it was in part through the urgency of Christian friends, that he prepared any of his writings for publication. It also happened to Mr. Hooker, as to Mr. Shepard, and perhaps to other Puritan preachers, that while in England, they were followed by note-takers, or stenographers, who wrote down their discourses as preached, and printed them without permission or revision. The motive of such persons, it is most natural to hope, was to do good by the dissemination of the rich instructions with which the discourses abounded, and by which, perhaps, they themselves had been edified. Even as thus published, they might have been useful to the afflicted people of Christ, and to inquirers of that trying period. However, their publication in a different way, would have been far preferable, as injustice was sometimes done to Mr. Hooker's views as a preacher, and to his reputation as an author, by inaccuracies in the statement of his sentiments, and in style.

It was some apology for the publication of Mr. Hooker's discourses in this way, that his great aversion to publishing anything of his own, kept his writings out of the hands of readers who had not enjoyed the privilege of hearing him in public. The reason for this aversion to authorship does not appear from anything he ever said, but is left to be inferred from his obvious indisposition to court notoriety. This is well in itself. But in effect, it becomes a fault when it interferes with methods of usefulness which are opened by divine providence, and solicited by the spiritual tastes and necessities of Christians. If every good man with a mind capable of acting on other minds through the press, may yield to his diffidence of authorship, and shut up all the results of his studies and his preaching, in manuscripts as illegible as the few of Mr. Hooker's which have been preserved — then neither the church nor the world are likely to be benefited by his knowledge and attainments, after he has gone to his grave.

Mr. Hooker's preparation of anything of his own for the press, therefore, seems to have been done from the pressure of two things. *First*, he was liable to all the mortifications and misapprehensions attendant on surreptitious publication by others, and he knew not whom. *Second*, his friends importuned him, with an urgency which he could not very well withstand. It is owing to these two causes, and to the fact that a considerable number of his sermons were copied by Mr. Higginson (Mather says about 200), and sent to England for publication after his death, that even so many of his works have appeared as are now in existence.

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<sup>1</sup> It was first published in 1629, prior to Hooker's move to America. — WHG

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The work entitled, “The Application of Redemption,” is one which Mr. Hooker prepared for the press with his own hand; and in point of finish, is far in advance of several others of his works. The “Epistle to the Reader” having the signatures of Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye, two eminent men in the Puritan ranks of the time, contains the following passages:

“There have been published, long since, many parts and pieces of this author upon this argument, preached sermon-wise by him here in England (which in preaching them, enlightened all those parts). Yet, having been taken down by an unskillful hand, which upon [Hooker’s] recess into those remote parts of the world, was bold to print and publish them, without his privity or consent (one of the greatest injuries which can be done to any man). It came to pass that his genuine meaning — and this in points of so high a nature, and in some things differing from the common opinion — was diverted in those printed sermons, from the fair and clear draught of his own notions and intentions. This is because they were so utterly deformed and misrepresented in multitudes of passages; and in the rest, they were but imperfectly and crudely set forth.

“Here, in these treatises you have his heart from his own hand; his own thoughts drawn by his own pencil. *This is all truly and purely his own, not only as preached, but as written by himself*, in order for the press. This may be a great satisfaction to all who honored and loved him (as who that was good, and knew him, did not?), especially those who received benefit by those other imperfect editions. And we cannot help but look at it as a blessed Providence of God, that the publishing of the same by others (in that manner mentioned) should have provoked him to it. And it is a providence that by the excitation of the church (of which he was the pastor in *New England*), to go over the same materials again in the course of his ministry among them — in order to perfect it by his own hand, for public light — thereby to vindicate both himself and it from that wrong which otherwise would have remained forever irrecompensible. And hereby it came to pass (that so far as he has proceeded), this subject came to have a *third concoction* in the heart and head of him who was one of the most experienced Christians, and of acutest abilities, who have been living in our age. He *preached* more briefly about this subject, *first*, while he was a Fellow and Catechist in Emmanuel College, in Cambridge. His notes were then so much esteemed, that many copies of it were written out by many who did not hear the sermons; and they are yet extant by them. And then again a second time, and more largely, many years after, at Great Chelmsford in Essex. The product of these, was those books of sermons that have gone under his name. And last of all, *now* in *New England*. And that was in and to a settled church of saints, to which the promise is made, of being ‘*The Seat and Pillar of Truth*,’ and in which all ordinances are set as the loadstone in the steel, having the greater power and energy in which the presence of Christ breaks forth, and all His springs are found therein.”

Mr. Hooker’s series of discourses on the latter portion of our Savior’s Intercessory Prayer, found in Joh 17.20-26, is published in the same volume with the foregoing. It includes a prefatory epistle to the reader, having the same signatures. These were preached, as it appears from the preface, towards the close of his life, on occasions of the administration of the Lord’s Supper. The principal object of these discourses was to present this great and interesting subject: the spiritual union of believers with Christ. It is remarked, in the prefatory epistle,

“And indeed, he that is spiritual, and reads these explanations, will readily find and must acknowledge, that he was proportionally raised and assisted by a Gospel Spirit, as the dignity of the matter and the solemnity of the occasion, meeting in such conjunction, required — it being found in experience, that according to the elevation of the occasion, and sublimity of the matter discoursed about, the Holy Ghost raises and enlarges the spirits of a holy man of God, who is experienced in what he speaks”

From the above statement, and an attentive examination of the discourses to which it refers, it is to be inferred that Mr. Hooker was accustomed to make that “*high day*,” the sacramental Sabbath,



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a season of profit to the people of Christ, by rich instructions relating to Him; and eminently adapted to make the Lord's Supper a season of spiritual refreshment and delight. Amidst the sweet solemnities of that scene, where "*the love of Christ*" is celebrated — if his administration of the ordinance was in keeping with the preaching which preceded it, then the preparation of the hearts of Christians around him must have been made, for each to retire at its conclusion, saying with tenderness and emphasis, about Him whose love prepared the feast, "I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste."

These discourses are also commended to the reader, by the writers of the prefatory epistle, assuring him that,

*"they are all as they were, penned under his own hand; praying with all earnestness that the Holy Spirit of Christ who dwelt in the author so richly, and blessed his preaching of them with so much life and power; yes, that filled our Savior Christ's heart first in his praying and uttering these words; and then his beloved disciples so many years after, in penning them; would graciously accompany this quickening and heavenly exposition of them, to the hearts of all spiritual souls who read this."*<sup>1</sup>

Two other collections of Mr. Hooker's discourses were prepared from his manuscripts, as they were left in his own handwriting, and certified to be genuine in the prefatory epistles — one of them by Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye, dated June 26, 1656, and the other still earlier, in 1651, having a preface signed with the initials "*T. S.*," probably Thomas Shepard, his son-in-law, and his successor at Newtown.

The rest of Mr. Hooker's published writings appeared without any intimations, by preface or otherwise, of the editorship under which they were brought forward; with the exception of his "Poor Doubting Christian drawn to Christ" The American edition of this book, published more than a hundred years ago (1743) in Boston, appeared with a brief sketch of his life, by Rev. Thomas Prince; and from this was printed the Hartford edition of 1845.

In proceeding to consider the characteristics of Mr. Hooker's Writings, we first notice the fact, discoverable by a glance at the catalogue already given, that *Christ Jesus was his grand theme*. He contemplates the soul in various relations to Christ; its "Preparation for Christ;" "Vocation or Effectual Calling to Christ;" "Union with Christ;" "Ingrafting into Christ;" "Drawn to Christ." The spirit which led him thus to keep the Great Redeemer before the eyes of his hearers and the readers of these works, also pervades his writings upon other subjects, the *titles* of which do not contain the name of Christ. The Savior of lost men was "all and in all" with him. It was remarked of him, by an early historian of New England, that

*"although he had a notable hand at discussing and adjusting controversial points, he would hardly ever handle any polemical divinity in the pulpit. Rather, the very spirit of his ministry lay in the points of the most practical religion — in the grand concerns of a sinner's preparation for, implantation in, and salvation by the glorious Lord Jesus Christ."*<sup>2</sup>

Nor does it appear, in the examination of his published writings, that Mr. Hooker was accustomed to bring forward and discuss theological positions as such, in the way of a system. Perhaps this was a defect; but if so, there was ample atonement made for it in the other excellencies of his preaching. His subjects appear to have been chosen with reference to meeting the particular wants of his Christian hearers and others, arising out of the exigencies of the times, and the trials, inward and outward, which were experienced by the people of God with whom he became acquainted.

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<sup>1</sup> Preface to the work.

<sup>2</sup> *Magnalia*, I, 314.

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And yet Mr. Hooker's theology was sound in every point; and his positions of a doctrinal character, wherever given, were set in unquestionable clearness. There is not a sentence in all his writings, which he prepared for the press himself, nor in those published by others, interpreted by the general scope of his works, which contains the slightest savor of Arminianism, Pelagianism, Antinomianism, or any like errors. It is impossible for the attentive and discriminating reader to fail to discern, that on all the great and fundamental doctrines of the Scriptures — as understood, believed, and taught by strong men among the Puritan divines, and by the soundest theologians of the present age — he was firmly established. No man, indeed, can treat such deep subjects of Christian experience as he discussed, and do it with such skill, thoroughness, and adaptation to the vicissitudes of the Christian life that appear on his pages, without being a firm believer in, the entire depravity of man by nature; his helpless dependence upon "the power of the Spirit of God," and the necessity of his regeneration by the Holy Spirit; the sovereignty of God in the dispensation of grace to guilty men; the deity of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit; and all the truths which concern man's deliverance from sin and woe growing out of these; the atonement of Christ, as the only satisfaction to divine justice on man's behalf; justification by faith alone, and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ; the justice of God in his final and eternal retributions upon sinners who reject the salvation offered in Christ Jesus; and the unspeakable grace of God in the bestowment of eternal life upon the heirs of salvation.

These and all the other great truths — which in more recent times have been variously denominated by "Orthodox," "Calvinistic," "the doctrines of the Reformation," or "Old Divinity" — constitute the basis of Mr. Hooker's writings. And they impart to them a richness, seriousness and most searching power upon the conscience and the heart. His writings are an enigma, if he didn't fully believe these first great truths of the Christian system. And his habit of studying the condition and necessities of men as sinners, and of those who had entered upon the Christian life, was obviously in connection with these high and holy truths — and with reference to their efficient instrumentality, through the power of the divine Spirit in man's salvation from sin and death.

Mr. Hooker was accustomed to treat much of the experiences of the soul, as they appeared both before and after regeneration, and in the progress of Christian sanctification. He studied the unregenerate heart, as well as the heart of the new man in Christ Jesus. As an example of the former, take the treatise with the impressive title, "A Treatise upon Contrition." In it is discovered how God breaks the heart and wounds the soul in the conversion of a sinner to himself.<sup>1</sup> His pages abound with passages which are strikingly descriptive of the endlessly diversified exercises of an unregenerate mind — from those of a state of insensibility to eternal things, through all the workings of thought and feeling under awakening, fear, conviction of sin, and conflict with the truths and claims of God, and with the conditions of the salvation of the gospel. He shows himself familiar with the innumerable cavils and subterfuges of an unregenerate heart; with every objection, and every form of self-delusion and hypocrisy which the sinner practices upon himself and his fellow men, and with which he seeks to elude the claims of a righteous God. And he even contemplates, and by Scripture light analyzes, the experiences of the lost and the despairing in the world of woe. And he shows not only what are the present elements of the sinner's unhappiness, on this side of the grave, but what will be the fearful elements of that wretchedness which will overwhelm the ungodly in eternity. And then, when he treats the regenerate soul, he appears to have read the history of the experiences of all the saints who have ever reached heaven; and to have studied them, from the first emotions of Christian hope, up to the highest raptures of the dying hour of the believer in Jesus; and then to have followed on, by Scripture light, into the scenes of heavenly bliss; and to have contemplated their bliss as consisting in *being where Christ is*, and *beholding the glory of God in heaven*.

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<sup>1</sup> The same noticed in the list of his works, called "The Soul's Preparation for Christ."

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At every step in his discussions of Christian duty and experience, he appears acquainted with the ever-varying circumstances of the Christian life; and like Bunyan's "Mr. Great-heart," to know how to counsel pilgrims of all varieties of Christian temperament, on the way to "the Celestial City." Not many writers on Christian experience equal him in treating this class of subjects; and none surpass him in the richness of scriptural instruction, in which he spreads them out before the minds of his readers, and awakens the deep feelings of their hearts, inciting them to seek the communications of the Spirit for their advancement in holiness.

But it will be important to the object of the present volume, to show more particularly the manner in which Mr. Hooker was accustomed to instruct the two great classes of men: those in an *unregenerate* state, and those in a state of *grace* and of progressive *sanctification*.

In the instructions which he gives to those who are yet in a state of unregeneracy, it is evidently his great object to bring God and the sinner together — or more properly, to bring the sinner to be "reconciled to God," and to enter upon the way of eternal life. In doing this, however, he takes high ground on behalf of God, as holy, just, merciful, and sovereign. With the utmost fidelity of an "ambassador for Christ," he advocates every claim of the divine holiness upon the sinner; lays upon his conscience and his heart, the tremendous weight of the divine law, and the dread responsibility of all his transgressions, and of his final destruction if he perishes. He leaves nothing untried in the way of argument on the side of God, which love to the divine character and jealousy for the divine honor could prompt him to plead with the sinner's conscience. He applies himself with directness and unsparing pungency, to the unregenerate man, respecting the manifestations of his impenitence, in whatever form they appear. Having studied the soul in its unregeneracy, by light shining from the glory of the divine character, he gives the results of his studies, in faithful endeavors to help the man see himself by the same light. In relation to conviction of sin by the divine law, his views were of the same character with those which have been entertained and acted upon by New England ministers, in the revivals which President Edwards describes, and in those which occurred during the first quarter of the present century.

The foregoing remarks will be best understood with the aid of a few illustrative extracts, on topics which can be named.

*"What the true sight of sin is.* It is not every sight of sin that will serve the turn, nor every apprehension of a man's vileness; but it must have these two properties — first, he must see sin *clearly*; secondly, *convictingly*. If he would see his sin clearly, he must see it truly and fully, and be able to fathom the depth of his corruptions, and to dive into the depths of the wretchedness of his vile heart. Otherwise it will befall a man's sin, as it does the wound of a man's body. When he looks over the wound lightly, and doesn't search it to the bottom, it begins to fester and rankle; and so in the end he is slain by it. Thus it is with most sinners. We dismiss it all with this, 'We are sinners,' and such ordinary confessions; but we never see the depth of the wound of sin, and so we are slain by our sins. It is not enough to say, 'It is my infirmity, and I cannot mend it;' or 'We're *all* sinners.' A man must test his ways as a goldsmith does his gold — in the fire. He must search narrowly, and have light to see what the vileness of his own heart is, and what his sins are that procure the wrath of God against him. As David says, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet to your testimonies.' The phrase in the original is, 'I turned my sins upside down.' He looked over all his ways. And Zechariah says, 'They will look on me whom they have pierced, and will mourn for him as one mourns for an only son, and will be in bitterness for him as one who is in bitterness for his first born.'

"We must look upon the nature of sin, in the venom of it; the deadly hurtful nature that it has, for the plagues and miseries it procures to our souls. Compare sin with those things that are most fearful and horrible. Suppose a soul who is present here, were to behold the damned in hell. If the Lord gave you a little peep-hole into hell, so you could see the horror of those damned souls, and your heart began to shake in consideration of it, then propound this to your own

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heart, ‘what pains the damned in hell endure for sin!’ and your heart will shake and quake at it. The least sin you ever committed, though you make light of it, is a greater evil than the pains of the damned in hell, setting aside their sin. All the torments in hell are not so great an evil as the least sin is. Men begin to shrink at this, and are loathe to go down to hell and be in endless torments.”

“*What a horrible thing sin is.* That which deprives a man of the greatest good, must be the greatest evil. The good of the soul is to have a heart united to God, and to have fellowship with him, and salvation through him: to be one with God is the chief good of the soul. It is sin that breaks the union between God and us — ‘Your sins have separated you and your God.’ (Isa 59.2) It is not punishment that takes away the mercy of God from us, but a proud and rebellious heart, and contempt for God’s ordinances. There is nothing so contrary and opposite against the Lord, as sin and corruption; and this is the reason why God is the inflictor of all the punishments of the damned in hell. Sin procures all plagues and punishments unto the damned. Therefore, being the *cause* why they suffer, it must be greater than all *punishments*. For all punishments are made miserable by sin, therefore sin is a greater evil than all the miseries of the damned. Let us look upon sin through these things; and when our corrupt heart provokes us, and the world allures us, and the devil tempts us to take any contentment in a sinful way — suppose that we saw hellfire burning before us, and the pit of hell gaping to swallow us; and sin enticing us. And then let us say to our souls, ‘it is better for a man to be cast into the torments of hell among the damned, than to be overcome with any sin, and so rebel against the Lord. If a man were in hell and lacked his sins, the Lord would love him in hell, and deliver him from all those plagues. But if a man were free from all punishments, and lived in honor and wealth — and yet were a sinful and wretched creature — the Lord would hate him in the height of all his prosperity, and throw him down to hell forever.”

“*How to see our sins convictingly.* This is the cursed distemper of our hearts, that however we may hold it to be generally true, when we come to our *own* sins, the case is altered; and we never come to see them rightly, as they concern our own particular case. Arrest your soul in a special way, about those sins of which *you* stand guilty. This phrase in Job is to good purpose: ‘You look narrowly at my paths; you set an imprint for the heels of my feet.’ (Job 13.27) As God followed Job hard on his heels, and narrowly observed his ways, so deal you with your own soul — set an imprint for the heel of your heart. Arrest your heart in particular for your sins. Follow them to your heart, and make a hue and cry after your sins, and drag your heart before the Lord, and say, ‘Are murder, pride, drunkenness and uncleanness such horrible sins, and does God thus fearfully plague them? Lord, it was *my* heart that was proud and vain: it was *my* tongue that spoke filthily and blasphemously. My hand has wrought wickedness; my eye was wanton, and my heart was unclean and filthy. Lord, here they are. It is my affections that are disorderly, and I am the one who delights too much in the world.’ Thus bring you your heart before the Lord. Play the part of Nathan, and say, ‘I am the man.’ The soul must be set down with the audience of the truth; and the conscience of a sinner should be so convicted as to yield and give way to what is known — not seeking any excuse or way to oppose the truth which is revealed. This particular apprehension of sin is like the indictment of the sinner before God. And his conviction is what brings the soul to such a pass, that the heart *will* not — no, it *does* not — no, which is more, it *cannot* escape from the truth revealed.

“*We must go to God for knowledge.* The Lord knows our hearts; and therefore we must go to him, so that he will make us able to know them too.

“If any stubborn heart says, ‘God is merciful, and therefore we may live as we wish,’ take heed! That just law that has been contemned, and those righteous statutes that have been broken, and God who has been provoked by you, will be revenged upon you. Did any ever provoke the Lord and prosper, and will *you* begin? Where are Nimrod, and Nebuchadnezzar and Pharaoh and

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Herod, and those proud persons who set their mouth against God, and their hearts against heaven? What has now become of them? They are now in the lowermost pit of hell! God sent Pharaoh into the Red Sea; and for all we know, his soul may now be roaring in hell. This is certain: that whoever resists God, will find him a swift Judge to condemn him.

*“You don’t know your sins.* Therefore get home to the law, and look into its mirror; then tally up all your sins thus: ‘So many sins against God himself in the first commandment; against his worship in the second; against his name in the third; against his Sabbath in the fourth commandment. Indeed, all our thoughts, words and actions, all have been sins that are able to sink our souls to the bottom of hell. Those sins of yours were the witnesses against our Savior: they were the soldiers that took him, the thorns that pierced him, the spear that gored him, the cross that took away his life. The soldiers and Pilate, and the Scribes and Pharisees, could have done nothing to our Savior if not for your sins. Your sins *caused* all this; your wicked thoughts and wicked actions caused our Savior to cry out, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’”

*“Sins of the thoughts and imagination.* Look at thoughts in regard to the other evils of our lives, which are acted out and appear in our daily course. We may thus come to take a guess at the greatness of the evil of our thoughts. For it will appear that they are the causes of all other evils. Therefore it cannot be doubted there is more and worse evil in them than in all the rest. A man’s imaginations are the forge of villainy — where it is all framed; the warehouse of wickedness; the magazine of all mischief and iniquity; where the sinner is furnished to commit all evil in all his ordinary course; the sea of abominations which overflows into all the senses; they are polluted in all the parts of the body, and defiled and carried aside with many foul corruptions. ‘Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false-witnessing, and blasphemies; these are the things that defile a man.’ (Mat 15.19-20) *There* is the nest where all these foul vermin are bred. The imagination of our mind is the great wheel, that carries all with it; that loathsome and execrable wickedness, worse than the sun ever saw, or the earth ever bore (the unpardonable sin excepted). The killing of the Lord Jesus, the Lord of life — the seed of it was a thought cast into the heart of Judas by Satan (Joh 13.3). It was warmed by a covetous disposition, and so it brought forth that hideous treachery, the betraying of the Lord Jesus.

“Look at the large extent of this spiritual wickedness of the mind, which cannot be bounded; the unavoidableness that cannot be prevented; and in both we shall see and be forced to confess the aggravations of this evil. There is a compass in which a man’s *words* and *actions* may be confined; in which he cannot vent the venom of his words, or express his poisonous practices among all men; not among many, many times. But *there are no limits or bounds to be set to the thoughts of a man’s mind, or the lusts and desires of the heart.* As the evils of our whole course have their rise and cause from our thoughts, so they are nourished by them. Our imaginations are the womb where wickedness is conceived. They are also the breasts and teats where they are maintained and nursed. The sinews of the strength of our distempers lie in the lustings of our mind and heart. When the soul sucks the sweet of a distemper by daily meditation on it, it lies at the teat, as it were, and draws out the spirits and quintessence of any foul lusts and temptations, by daily attendance bestowing his mind and thoughts upon it, from which the soul comes to be incorporated into a lust, and wholly under its power. So that, even if the evils are not outward and scandalous, they become more heinous in the sight of God.”

“The prophet’s advice to Jerusalem when He would have her cleansed and saved, directs her to dislodge her vain thoughts; ‘O Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness, that you may be saved. How long shall your vain thoughts lodge within you?’ (Jer 4.14) These vain thoughts are those carnal reasonings by which the sinner would set aside the authority of the truth, so that the sinner might see neither the loathsomeness of his sin, nor the danger of his estate, nor the necessity to recover himself out of it. And if these thoughts lodge within him, there will be no entertaining of the power of any ordinance or counsel that will take place with him; reproof will

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not awe, nor exhortation persuade. He casts out and keeps away any necessity to be washed and so be saved. If then, by those vain thoughts, your heart is estranged from God, and carried in opposition against him; if they are the cause of all sins committed and continued in; if they are a hindrance to all means that might procure our good — then their evil is exceedingly heinous, and we should therefore judge it so, and be affected by it.”

*“How the soul labors to beat back the power of the word.* The soul slights the apprehension of sin, and thinks that it isn’t so heinous and dangerous as these hot-spirited ministers present it to men. This is usually the common conceit of all men, naturally, and even of us all to more or less take a slight account of sin — ‘What,’ says one, ‘are not all sinners, as well as we? Though we have many failings, yet we have many fellows.’ ‘O, all the world lies in sin, and we do no more than the world does.’ ‘Aren’t all sinful by nature, and aren’t some saved? So why not me as well as others?’ ‘What, would you have us saints on earth?’ What you say is true indeed — you have many fellows in your sins; and you will share with many fellows in the punishment of your sins. There is room enough in hell, for you and all your fellows. Hell has opened her mouth wide. Indeed, the more companions you have had in your sins, the more plagues you will have. What a senseless thing it is to be such a one as God hates. Is this all your pleasure, that you are a hater of God?”

“Christ never prayed for the world, and he will never save the world... No man is saved by nature. But if any are saved, the Lord opens that man’s eyes and breaks his heart; and so it must be with you too, if ever you think to receive any mercy from God. Do you say it is your *nature* to sin? Then I say, the greater is your wickedness. Therefore, mourn all the more for your sins, because it is your cursed nature to do so. And say, ‘Lord, if only temptations or the world allured me to this, there would be some hope that you would have mercy upon me. But, O Lord, I have a cursed nature. Even if there were no devils, no world, no outward temptations, this cursed nature of mine would yet sin against you.’”

*“How to meet the pride of human ability.* If God is so mighty (they say) that he knows all, and will call us to account for all, then it is but sorrowing all the more — and we will do that afterwards. It is but repenting that will make it all well enough.” Don’t be deceived, God is not, — no, He *cannot* be, mocked, and therefore, don’t delude your own souls. Every repentance will not serve the turn. You may have a remorseful heart, and repent, and cry to God for your sins. Yet this tormenting of your heart will be but a forerunner of your everlasting damnation hereafter. The Lord may deal with you as Moses said of the people of Israel: “You returned and wept before the Lord, but he would not hear your voice.” So the time may come that all weeping and wailing will not serve the turn. Judas had appalling horrors of conscience; he took shame upon himself and made restitution; and yet he was a damned creature forever. Do you think you have repentance at your command? This is what cuts the throat of men’s souls, and deprives them of all the benefit of means of grace. If you considered your own weakness, you wouldn’t say that repentance is in your own power. Remember what the apostle says, ‘If God will perhaps give them repentance, to acknowledge the truth, that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.’ (2Tim 2.25-26) It is only *perhaps*. It is a rare work, and few have it.”

The secret of the solemnity, pungency, and earnestness with which Mr. Hooker was accustomed to thus apply himself to men (those whom he would disturb in their sins, and bring to a just acquaintance with their own characters) is accounted for when we find him with his eye upon Scriptures which teach the aggravated guilt of men’s unbelief — saying, “I must confess, that the consideration of these passages sometimes makes the soul of a poor minister shake within him.” Truly, he was one who sympathized with that prophet who said, “But his word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; and I was weary with forbearing and I could not stay it.” (Jer 20.9) With such conceptions as his, of the deep guilt of sin in man, and of holiness and justice

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in God against whom it is committed, and of His fearful majesty and might in punishing it — his preaching might well be arousing, humbling and overpowering to the sinner in his impenitence.

Here Mr. Hooker's explanation should be noticed, of his reasons for thus solemnly and urgently dealing with unregenerate men. Noting the objection, "Some will say, if I deal thus plainly with them, I will discourage them altogether," he says: "Indeed, but it will make them sound Christians. See what the Lord says: 'Plead with your mother.' (Hos 2.2) The word in the original is, 'call her into court, and call her by her name.' And the Lord says by Ezekiel, 'Cause Jerusalem to know her abominations.' (Eze 16.2) He gives the reasons for acting on such examples and instructions as these: 'because the word thus applied hits sooner than it would otherwise. Excessive discourses, that men are great sinners and the like, are like the confused noise that was in the ship when Jonah was asleep in it. They never troubled him till at last the master came and said, 'Awake, O sleeper, and call upon your God;' and as a Father observes, 'they came around him, and every man had a blow at him, and then he awakened.' The word of God *particularly* applied, sinks deepest. 'The words of the wise are like goads, and like nails fastened by the masters of assemblies.'"

Here we see a reason why plain teaching finds so much opposition. "That which works and troubles most, is what they most distaste; that which gives the least quiet to them, they give the least respect and liking. Some men love vain and windy discourses, to please sinful humors and corrupt hearts, rather than some bitter and particular reproofs which will make them sound in the faith. Ahab would nourish four hundred false prophets at his table, and make choice provision for them, so that they might feed his humor, and speak good things to him. But he was not able to abide the sight, scarcely to hear the *name* of Micaiah the prophet of the Lord, who would speak the counsel of the Lord without fear and partiality (1Kng 22). So too, those in Isa 30.10: 'Who say to the seers, do not see, and to the prophets, do not prophesy to us right things — speak smooth things to us, prophesy deceits;' so it might suit their several appetites, and be swallowed without chewing. It is strange to see that when such men have told a grave tale, and vented a heartless, toothless discourse, there is neither pith nor power in it. I say, it is strange to see what admiration and esteem such carnal hearts will set upon such persons, and such expressions as these: 'Their parts, prudence, and discretion are great.' 'Oh how sweet and seasonable was their discourse.' They say how glad they are to hear, and how unweariable to attend such men. And all the while they may sit and sleep in their sinful condition. and neither have their consciences awakened, nor their corruption discovered. This is the disease of which Paul complains, as incident to the last age of the world; and therefore he advises his scholar, Timothy, 'Be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine; for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts they will heap up for themselves teachers, having itching ears;' — itching ears that must be scratched, not boxed."

Mr. Hooker is unsurpassed in solemnity, by any preacher of his day, in his conceptions and descriptions of the scenes of the judgment and of eternity, as they are to be presented to the mind of the sinner. Leading the sinner forward to the great and final day of judgment, he points him to the fearful array of the divine attributes against him. "I think I see the Lord of heaven and earth, and the attributes of God appearing before him. The mercy of God, the goodness of God, the wisdom of God, the power of God, the patience and long-suffering of God; and they all come to a sinner, a wicked hypocrite, or a carnal professor, and they say, 'Bounty has kept you; patience has borne with you; long-suffering has endured you; mercy has relieved you; the goodness of God has been great to you.' All these comfortable attributes will say, 'Farewell damned soul; you must go from here to hell, to have fellowship with damned ghosts.' Mercy shall never more be enlarged towards you. You will never more have patience to bear with you; never more goodness to screen you; never more power to strengthen you. No, you who have till now withdrawn yourselves from God's wisdom and gospel; you shall never more have wisdom to guide you; never more the gospel to comfort you; never more mercy to cheer you. You shall then go into endless and ceaseless torments. There you shall never be refreshed, never eased, never comforted. And then you will

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remember your sins; ‘my covetousness and pride was the cause of this; I may thank my sins for this!’”

With like solemnity he gives the sinner the most vivid and awful descriptions of the agonies which await him hereafter. Noting that plea of unbelieving men respecting their future misery, “If we cannot avoid it, then we are resolved to bear it as we may,” he proceeds to reply — “Judge the torments of hell by some little beginning of it, and the dregs of God’s vengeance by some little sips of it; and then judge how unable you are to bear the whole, by your inability to bear even a little of it in this life, in the terror of conscience. As the wise man says, ‘a wounded spirit, who can bear it?’ (Pro 18.14) When God lays the flashes of hellfire upon your soul, you cannot endure it. Whatever a *man* can inflict upon a poor wretch may be borne. But when the *Almighty* comes in battle array against a poor soul, how can he undergo it? Witness the saints who have felt it; and also witness the wicked themselves who have had beginnings of hell in their consciences. When the Lord has let in a little horror of heart into the soul of a poor sinful creature, how he is transported with an insupportable burden. When it is day, he wishes it were night, and when it is night, he wishes it were day. All the friends in the world cannot comfort him. Indeed, many have sought to hang themselves; to do anything rather than suffer a little vengeance of the Almighty. One man is roaring and yelling as if he were in hell already, and admits of no comfort. If the *drops* are so heavy, what will the whole *sea* of God’s vengeance be? If he cannot bear the one, how can he bear the other?”

*“The reason why a sinner never comes out of hell. A poor creature bearing God’s anger, has not only God’s anger seizing upon him, but it also overwhelms him, because he is not able to bear it. The plague prevails against him. Not only the wrath of God lies upon a sinner in hell, but it crushes him there, so that he can never get away from it. And this, divines call the absolute damnation — such a damnation as to overturn a sinner in hell, and crush him there forevermore. The reason why a sinner never comes out of hell is this: because his sufferings are not infinitely satisfiable here, according to how his sins have infinitely provoked God. For just as Adam’s sin was infinite and provoking, because it was against the Godhead, so the sufferings must be infinite. Now the sufferings of Christ were of infinite value; but Adam’s sufferings were not of an infinite nature. Christ bore the wrath of God, and wrestled with it, and overcame it, and came out from under the heavy displeasure of God; and why? Because his sufferings were able to satisfy an infinite God, who was thus infinitely wronged by the sin of man. Therefore, the sufferings must be of an infinitely satisfying nature,<sup>1</sup> as you will conceive by this: a finite sin of Adam, committed against God, was infinitely provoking; but the sufferings of Christ were infinitely satisfying; and so they correlated in proportion to what divine justice required. This is the meaning of Act 2.24, ‘Whom God has raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be held by it;’ and of 1Cor 15.64, ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ Christ endures wrath and overcomes it. Why didn’t he ‘go to the Father?’ Because he has paid the debt to the uttermost. He satisfied justice to the full; for if he had not satisfied justice, he would have been kept in the grave till this day, and we would have been condemned. But now he has borne and satisfied all; therefore he must come forth to immortality and glory. Remember these conclusions; and think this way, ‘Has my Savior done all this for me? Then well will I think upon it, and lay it by me forever.’”*

Mr. Hooker’s writings abound in passages such as those quoted thus far; indicating that he spared no endeavors to help unrenowned men to conceive of their fearful state of danger on this side of the grave; and of their unutterable woes hereafter, if they pass the gates of death without grace and hope. He studied “the faithful word,” as giving faithful warnings to the rejecter of the grace

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<sup>1</sup> A sinner who is apart from Christ, doesn’t have an infinite satisfaction paid on his behalf by Christ. He must therefore satisfy it himself. An infinite satisfaction being required, he must satisfy it in hell, for eternity. – WHG



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which is in Christ Jesus; and evidently he regarded it as an indispensable part of a minister's work, that he should make known" the terrors of the Lord."

And yet, this was only the beginning of what Mr. Hooker aimed and endeavored to do, that he might "persuade men," and win sinners to repentance and to Christ. As an example, he takes for a text, Act 2.37. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" He raises from it this doctrine: — "It is possible for the most stubborn sinner on earth, to get a broken heart." And while he most solemnly shows that the condition of every sinner is little short of utter desperation, yet he addresses himself to the "pricked in heart." Great though his guilt is, he teaches him most tenderly and delightfully that, "Christ is all-sufficient in power to procure mercy for all your sins; and the Spirit is sufficiently able to apply the satisfaction of Christ to your soul. And therefore, however fearful your condition (only the sin against the Holy Ghost excepted), there is power and mercy to pardon you, and it is possible for you to find mercy." Earnestly, solemnly, indeed terribly, he sounds in the ears of the sinner the alarms of the law, and aims to help most efficiently, his conceptions — to the utmost liveliness and terribleness — of the danger and misery of the sinner's present condition, and of what his future woes will be. So earnestly, also, and affectionately, he reasons with him on his duties, on the divine provision for his help, and of his opportunities for probation. And he meets and answers all his objections, whether originating in skepticism, or in discouragement, or in despair at the sight of his astounding guilt. There are no difficulties in the way of the sinner's persuasion to come to Christ, which he does not endeavor to thoroughly obviate, so that he will see himself without excuse, if he fails to find his way to God through Christ Jesus. These general remarks will be illustrated by a few examples.

"Here we may take notice of the marvellous tenderness and the loving nature of God in dealing with poor sinners, that in all His courses of justice He remembers some mercy; and in all the potencies of His wrath, he still drops in some cordial of comfort. He doesn't deal with us as he might, but so as He might be most comfortable every way, and useful to work upon our hearts, and to draw our souls home to himself. If the Lord should come against a sinner, and let fly His wrath against him, his soul would sink down under him. But blessed be God that he doesn't deal with our hearts as we deserve. If he were as rigorous against us, as we have been rebellious against him, we should sink in sorrow and fall into despair, never more to be recovered."

In dealing with the unregenerate man, Mr. Hooker remembers that one of the devices of the devil, when the sinner is shown his exceeding wickedness, is to tempt him to despair of the divine mercy.

"These two are the special extremes, that the devil seeks to drive a man into. If a man presumes his own sufficiency and thinks he is well enough, he won't go to Christ, because he thinks he doesn't stand in need of him. And if he despairs of forgiveness by Christ, he won't go to Christ. The soul *despairs* out of a stout (proud) heart — it has no sufficiency in itself, but it won't look for help and comfort from another. *Presumption* says, 'I have sufficiency in myself, and I don't need to go to Christ.' *Despair* says, 'I have no sufficiency, and therefore I won't go to Christ.' Here is the property of despair: to cast away all hope, when there is no hope that God will help. Now all the while the soul looks for sufficiency in Christ, there is hope; for though our sins are ever so heinous, that is nothing; the question is whether we can hope in Christ. For if all the sins that ever were, are, or shall be committed, ran into one man, as all rivers run into the sea, then Christ could as easily pardon his sins, as ever he pardoned the sins of any saints in heaven. A despairing heart is a proud and stubborn heart. Because he cannot have what he would on his own, he will therefore not go to another to receive it; and so he sinks down in his sins. Therefore, let this be the period and stint of meditation: when the soul so far sees sin and the punishment it deserves, that the heart is resolved that none but Christ can take away these sins and the punishments they are due; and it is resolved to seek to Christ and be beholden to him for all. When it is this way with a man, let him fly to the Lord Jesus Christ, and let this meditation of a

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man's corruptions be a bridge to carry him to Christ, so that he may have salvation which is promised through him, and which *shall* be bestowed upon all broken-hearted sinners. Mark what I say: a soul that will *not* seek Christ, and will *not* be beholden to Christ for what he needs — that soul lacks a broken heart."

"Take heed of that fearful and inconceivable sin of despair. We must despair in ourselves, and that is good; but this despair we now speak of is wondrously heinous in the eyes of God, and wondrously hurtful to your own soul. Therefore take heed of it forever, I say — this sin of despair. You must cast away all carnal confidence, and yet you must hope. 'Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.' (Psa 130.7) O, the Lord takes this very badly at our hands. You go down to the deep dungeon of your corruption, and there you say, 'These sins can never be pardoned; I am still proud and more stubborn; God does not see this distress; God does not succor; his hand cannot reach; his mercy cannot save.' Now mark what the prophet Isaiah says, to such a perplexed soul: 'Why do you say, my way is hidden from the Lord?' (Isa 40.27) 'No, no, my sins are greater than can be forgiven,' says the despairing soul. Then I think Satan is stronger to overthrow you, than God to save you. Then it seems sin is stronger to condemn you, than God is to do you good. Thus you make God out to be weaker than sin, than hell, and than the devil. And this is most injurious to God. What more can you say, and what more can you do, against the Lord?"

"This sin of desperation, just as it is most injurious to God, so it is extraordinary dangerous to your own soul. It is that which takes up the bridge, and cuts off all passages, so that no spiritual comfort and consolation can come into the poor soul of a sinner. This despair of the soul is that which cuts the sinews of all man's comfort, and dulls the power and edge of all means of grace. It daunts all a man's endeavors; no, it plucks up a man's endeavors quite by the roots, as it were. For that which a man despairs of, he will never labor after. 'Alas,' says a man, 'what difference for a man to pray? What does it profit a man to read? What benefit in all the means of grace? The stone is rolled upon me, and my condemnation is sealed forever. It is sure in heaven, and therefore I will never look after Christ, grace, and salvation anymore. The time of grace is past, the day is gone.' If Christians would pray for him, and ministers would labor to do him good, the poor sinner bids them to spare their labor, for hell is his portion, and his condemnation is sealed in heaven. See now and consider what desperate danger despair brings to a poor heart; it makes him to be beyond the reach of mercy, so that no means can come at him."

The following passages are like many others in which Mr. Hooker explains the way of a sinner's relief, both from the burden of his guilt, and from the despairing tendencies of which he may be the subject.

"The gospel alone reveals what may satisfy our spiritual necessities and answer the expectation of our faith, and the desires of our souls, upon the sense and feeling of those evils which, as insupportable, would otherwise sink them. This is the argument the apostle gives, Rom 1.16, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation.' And why? 'For in this, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith;' that is, from one degree of faith to another."

"A man is unrighteous, and possessed by the power and presence of it, and is under the hand of revenging justice for the same reason. And where may a righteousness be found, which may answer the necessities of the soul? The law never revealed this. The creatures never heard of it. The wisdom of man could never reach it. No, the excellency of all the knowledge of all angels was never able to devise it. But Christ, who came out of the bosom of the Father, has wrought this righteousness, and by the gospel he has 'brought life and immortality to light' (2Tim 1.10) which otherwise would never have seen light. And therefore the glad tidings of peace are said to come this way, and are not to be heard from any other coast. Tidings of evil come, like Job's messengers, from every quarter. The tidings we hear from the law are nothing but threatenings

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and wrath, ready to condemn us. Tidings from our own hearts are nothing but guilt and fear to terrify and arrest us. Tidings from hell are yet worse, there be nothing but subtle and malicious accusations. And those present us at home and abroad, in earth and in heaven, at God's tribunal, and require instant execution of such undeserving creatures. Glad tidings come only from the gospel. *'This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.'* Therefore the soul looks out and says, 'It may be.' This keeps the head above water."

From the passages which have thus far been given, we see with what fidelity he deals with the conscience of the unregenerate man. This class of extracts may properly be closed with one more, applicable to the condition of souls effectually called to Christ.

"Now, what I conclude with is this: you see how far the Lord has brought us; how the soul has been prepared, and cut off from sin and himself, if it is fitted for the Lord Jesus by contrition and humiliation; and that the soul comes to see that there is no hope in creatures, nor any succor in heaven but the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, at last the sinner comes and lies at the footstool of the Lord Jesus Christ; and knows that either he must be *another* man, or a *damned* man. Now he sees that prayer and all other means will not profit; and the power of the means will not yet prevail; and the power of his corruptions is not yet mastered. *Then* he looks up to Christ, and is contented that He do what he will with him.

"Now, when the Lord Jesus Christ sees him lie wearied thus with his corruptions, then the Lord gives special notice to his soul, that it is his purpose to do him good, and there is mercy for that broken heart of his. With that, hope is stirred, and it asks, 'Is it possible? Is it credible? Will all this wretchedness of mine be pardoned?' Desire is kindled and longs for that day; 'O that I might once see the funeral of my sins!' And then love and joy are cheered to entertain this mercy; and to say, 'O how the soul is bound to the God who offers free and undeserved grace to a stubborn rebellious-hearted sinner!' At last the will says 'Amen' to the promise, and says 'O, that mercy I *will* have.'

"Thus the soul has come home to God by calling. Now the prodigal has come home to his father; and the father's heart leaps within his breast when he sees him lie at the door. And as the Father rejoices, so the Angels in heaven rejoice. And all the faithful should rejoice and say, 'O my husband,' or 'my father,' or 'my child has come home again;' and 'my wife who was a sinful woman has come home again to her first and best husband.' You who have found it this way in yourselves, be comforted. You who know it in others, rejoice. Thus we have heard how the soul is ingrafted into the stock of Christ."

From the foregoing selections, and from numerous others which might be given from various parts of his works, illustrative of Mr. Hooker's manner of instructing the unconverted, it is to be seen that he was accustomed to throw his whole soul into the concerns of the sinner in his unregeneracy — to feel for him in a most lively manner, as guilty, and as exposed to "the righteous judgment of God," and to the woes of "the second death." And then, too, Mr. Hooker enters with great earnestness into the subject of the sinner's rescue; the possibility of it, the way and means of it, as set forth in "the glorious gospel of the blessed God" — with the purpose of helping the sinner to understand the way of relief, and how to avail himself of it. In short, as an instructor of those in an unregenerate state, he illustrated beautifully, that simple idea of Cecil respecting a faithful minister: "*A sinner trying to help a sinner.*" He seems to have had in vivid and tender recollection, his own experience as a sinner, before he came into the peace which is through a crucified Jesus, "remembering his own afflictions, the wormwood and the gall." And his may properly be regarded as an instructive example of deep ministerial sympathy in the miseries of the sinner as "having no hope, and without God in the world," — as "far off," and yet to be "made near by the blood of Christ."

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In his instructions to the regenerate, Mr. Hooker's writings, as already remarked, give evidence that having studied the Christian in almost every conceivable variety of spiritual state, he knew how to bring from the treasures of divine instruction, whatever was adapted to his necessities. He had no sympathy with the views of those who seem to think that it is a matter of course for a Christian to move on faithfully, happily, safely, and prosperously towards heaven. He appears to have viewed the Christian as one who is to be watched with unceasing care, by the under shepherd of Christ's flock; as one who is to be counseled, cautioned, sometimes rebuked; and many times to be helped as being in spiritual trouble, and exposed to countless moral and spiritual vicissitudes — to be the object of unceasing sympathy and prayer, by the watchman for souls.

A few extracts from his works, illustrative of the foregoing remarks, may be classified as they relate to the Christian's duties, his enjoyments, his spiritual trials and perplexities, his temptations, conflicts, encouragements, and final certainty of blessedness.

**THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTIES.** He was accustomed to press these, of every kind, with great earnestness and fidelity — whether they respect the divine honor, the good of men, or the Christian's own advancement in the divine life.

*In what lies the great strength of the Christian to do his duties.* "You who are one of Christ's, here is your comfort: whatever God in his word bids you to do, by his promise he has undertaken to make you able to perform. The truth is, the things that God has commanded you to do, are wondrously hard, even impossible for flesh and blood; but yet, notwithstanding, it is easy and possible for you, because God has undertaken to give you the strength to do them. So that you have great cause to be encouraged, considering the power of God. The power of God is with you. It is bound to be yours, by his promise; and if God is able, then you will obey whatever he has commanded you — so you will believe this promise, and use the means."

*Faith necessary to the energy of obedience.* "When the father of the possessed child (Mark 9) brought his son to Christ to be cured, 'Lord (he said) if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.' If you can do it? Christ says, 'If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.' So I say to those of you who are willing to obey God's commandments in all things, are you able to believe this doctrine that I have preached this day? that God will make you able, upon your endeavors to do all that he commands? If you could believe this, all obedience would be possible. But here is your fault (if it is not in the former): you cannot believe that God will give you strength over every lust; a lust that is strong in you by constitution, that is strong in you by custom, by education; a lust that has so great a rooting in you, that has so often foiled you; that God will help you against such a lust. Because you *cannot* believe, *here* is the cause that you cannot obey God's commands. What a shame this is, for you not to believe the God of truth; not to be able to take his word, when his word is confirmed by his promise; when his promise is seconded with his oath; when his oath is accompanied with so many seals, as you have received every time you received the Sacrament of the Supper; and yet, notwithstanding, you are not able to believe; what a shame this is!"

*Conformity to Christ.* "Did Christ refuse to give the least improvement of heart to any sin? Did he refuse to practice the least sin, in any measure? Then go and do likewise. Be like your Savior, that you may have some evidence that you have a title to him. 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them;' 'Be followers of God, as dear children.' Christ had no sin, nor fellowship with sin. Let his course and practice be your copy.

"But some will say, 'Would you have us be saints here on earth? How can it be, that we should know no sin, when we have such a body of death hanging upon us?' Yes, we may know no sin, though it hangs about us. The apostle does not say, *equal* God in holiness, but *imitate* him; and he does not say, follow him fully, but even '*as dear children.*' The Father is infinitely full of holiness. Follow God '*as dear children;*' do what you can; 'and then cry to Him to enable you to

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do what you cannot do. It was the practice of David (Psa 119.4-5), ‘You have commanded us to keep your precepts diligently; O that my ways were directed to keep your statutes!’ It is as if he said, ‘I know the Law requires it, and it is my duty to do it. Help, Lord; and take, Lord; and carry, Lord, your poor servant, and lead me into the land of righteousness.’ It is an evidence of one who is born of God.”

*How to form a right judgment of yourself.*

1. ‘You must first repair to the word, and attend to it daily. So look into the uprightness and sincerity of your own soul, which may in some measure reflect the word. Hear what the word says, and see what work of grace is in your heart, that reflects the word. And join sides in the testimony of the happiness of your condition. Be sure to take your soul at its best. Don’t always consider what is the worst in you, and go no further. Don’t only see your failings and infirmities, on the one side, that accuse you. But see if there is any soundness and uprightness; any goodness and truth of heart that may speak for you. Hear both sides. It is injustice to hear one side, and determine the cause by that. As the Lord deals with his servants, so you should deal with yourself.”

2. “Labor to have your conscience settled and convictingly established of that truth, of that grace, which reason (now informed) entertains, and the word witnesses to be in you. Mark, I say, if there is any lack of assurance of God’s love, and the settling of on your soul, so that evidence of the work of grace does *not* come powerfully upon your heart. Rather, there is some guilt of sin remaining, and conscience still accuses and condemns you. The truth is, even though reason is informed, conscience may still breed new broils at every turn, and make new pleas; and so it nips, disquiets, and torments our hearts, in staggering our hearts. Therefore, just as our judgments must be informed out of the word, that there is some good and soundness in our souls, so we must get conscience persuaded of it, so it may be on our side, and speak for us.”

3. “We should strive mightily to have our hearts overpowered with the evidence of the truth, which reason and conscience make good to us; that it may quietly entertain it, and humbly and calmly welcome it; that the heart may say Amen to what reason says, and conscience concludes; and set its seal to it, and yield and subject itself to it.”

4. “Maintain the truth, which you have received upon these good grounds, and your judgment, conscience, and heart have submitted to. It is the cunning of the enemy to lead you out; and he will have his vagary, and this turning, and the other wavering. But keep to the point; be sure to hold to that truth that has established you, by the evidence of reason, and the testimony of conscience, and the evidence of your souls. Let me teach you a little, who are weak:

*How the soul being tempted, may answer Satan’s accusations.* Satan, when a man has gained a little advantage, will begin to play the lawyer —

“*Satan.* ‘What, don’t you yet see what wants you have, and how many failings; how unfit for service, and how weak for service?’

“*Poor Soul.* It is true; but it is written (Pro 28.13), he that confesses and forsakes his sins shall find mercy. Though I am weak, and feeble, and unfit, yet I confess and forsake my sins; therefore I shall find mercy.

“*Satan.* Yes, that you do indeed. Don’t you apprehend, and doesn’t your conscience witness, that your heart is averse and untoward to duty, and unwilling to come to it, weary in it, and desirous to be free from it?

“*Poor Soul.* (Keep to the point and answer) I have many sins and many failings, it is true. But yet it is true: he that confesses and forsakes shall find mercy. And I confess, and forsake; therefore, I shall find mercy.

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“*Satan*. Yes, but are you tampering with God’s privy counsel? Do you know to whom mercy belongs? Secret things belong to God; he must give his mercy to whom he pleases, and his goodness to whom he sees fit.

“*Poor Soul*. (Keep still to the point, and say,) I don’t know what God’s secret will is; but I know what the word says, and what the Lord says, and what conscience says. I know, I confess, and forsake; therefore I shall find mercy.

“*Satan*. But many deceive themselves; mercy is a rare gift; few have it; and many dream of it, who will never share in it or partake of it, and why may you not be one of these?

“*Poor Soul*. (Keep still to the point, and answer) It is true, I may deceive myself; and my heart may be deceived. But the Lord will not deceive me; and the word cannot deceive me; and the Lord and the word say, he that confesses and forsakes shall find mercy. And I confess and forsake; therefore, I shall find mercy.

“*Satan*. How do you know that you apply the word rightly? May you not be deceived in that? The word is true and certain, but how do you know that you fitly apply this word?

“*Poor Soul*. I don’t know it, except by the word; and I repair there, that I may know it. And the Lord knows all; and the word informs me that whoever confesses and forsakes his sins will find mercy. And my conscience knows that I confess and forsake them; therefore I shall find mercy. And, Satan, if you will show me any other text contrary to this, I will yield; but otherwise I will never yield while the world stands.

“Thus you see how you may hold Satan to the word and keep him there. But if he leads you into wildernesses, and byways; and takes you to fears and suspicions, you are gone. Psa 119.99, ‘Through your commandments, You have made me wiser than my enemies.’”

*The sufferings of Christ are an appeal for Christian fidelity.* “Has our Savior thus suffered; and has he stepped in between the wrath of God the Father, and the faithful? <sup>1</sup> Justice says, ‘That soul has sinned, and must be damned;’ and Anger says, ‘I must break out against that soul.’ Then the Lord Jesus Christ steps in and says, ‘I will bear all, and undertake the satisfying of all; I will bear all those punishments due to him.’ You who are believers and have a share in Christ, I speak to you. Labor from here, to see the heinousness of sin; and to hate it because it has brought all this evil upon your Savior; and would have brought the same upon you, had the Lord Jesus Christ not stepped in between you and the wrath of the Father. Oh, look what your sin has done to the Lord Jesus Christ; and see if you can love it, and take contentment in the commission of it. Let me teach you how to do it. Send your thoughts far off, and see our Savior in the garden, crying out and saying, ‘My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death,’ ‘watch and pray;’ and also when he was in bitter agony, and ‘he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground,’ and his soul was almost broken within him, under the fierce indignation of the Lord; and he fell upon the ground — and yet all this would not do the deed. Follow him to the cross, and see him attended with the soldiers, and pierced through with a spear. See *then* if you can love your sins which have done all this.

And further — listen a while and hear that cry, ‘My God! my God! why have you forsaken me?’ Have you the hearts of *men*? I don’t say of *Christians*. Oh brethren! it went very heavy with our Savior. O go your ways home. I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ, and answer your own hearts; or rather, answer the petitions of our Savior, and say, ‘Lord, why have you forsaken? Oh Lord, it was for my pride, and my contempt of your word, and my despising of holy duties, and for the rest of my sins that I should have been the one forsaken; and yet you were contented to be forsaken for me.’ Oh, can you consider this, and still love your sins, which have brought all

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<sup>1</sup> i.e., the believer - ED.

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this misery upon the Savior? I charge you brethren, if you ever had any tender love for Jesus Christ, or any regard for your own comfort, go your ways, and be forever cast down and humbled for those evil ways of yours which brought our Savior to such a gulf of misery; and to be angry with those sins which made God the Father angry with the Lord Jesus Christ; and take revenge upon that proud and stubborn heart that brought all this misery upon your Savior.”

*The sense of sin, under the life of righteousness.* “Those who have the life of righteousness in them, apprehend in their hearts that sin is the greatest evil, and the most bitter thing in the world — whether it is a great sin or a small sin, in regard to the matter of it; whether it is a secret sin or a public sin, in the circumstances. However sins may differ, the righteous apprehend the greatest evil and bitterness to be in *all* sin. You have Paul for this, Rom 7.24, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!’ The remembrance of that original corruption that was in his soul, and could never be rooted out — this is what made him cry out for deliverance.”

*Growth in knowledge of our own vileness.* “Grow every day in the observance of your own baseness, and the acquaintance of your own weakness in the best of your duties. This is a sweet inclination of a Christian: the more God bestows, and the more grace God grants, the Christian goes his way and hangs his head, and wonders at God’s goodness, that the Lord should ever help a poor creature to so call upon his name, saying, ‘Lord, it is your grace; it came from the assistance of your spirit.’ But that a wretch should ever say to his services and duties, ‘you are my gods’ — *abhor* this in your soul; and keep a marvellous dislike of yourself, and a low esteem of your duties; and wonder at God’s grace; and admire God’s mercy; and return to God who has given you power to perform any service. Lie in the dust, and trample on your own performances. Do as Paul did, ‘But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.’” (Phi 3.7)

*The slow but sure death of sin.* “Though Christ does not kill ‘the old man’ immediately, yet he kills it certainly. And once the death-wound is given, it can never be recovered again. Hereby you may test whether there is a death of sin in you — though you may find in yourselves all the parts and kinds of sin and corruption, the several lusts and inclinations of the flesh rising and bubbling up in you; and though particular corruptions may sometimes have a very strong hand, and put forth an abundance of might in you, to the point of mastering and captivating you so that you are for the present ‘sold under sin,’ as the apostle Paul speaks of himself, Rom 7.14 — yet, if there is this *weakening* of corruption, and that occurs universally and constantly, then it is most certain there is a death of sin in you.”

*How you may know the life of righteousness.* “Wherever there is a life of righteousness, there is a seeking after God and the things of God — God in himself, God for himself, God as he is accomplished with his holy excellencies, and admirable attributes and perfections. And as such a man seeks after God, so he seeks after the things of God — the favor and mercy of God; the presence and fellowship of God; those glorious inheritances which are God’s, and are called God’s, and because they are with him. The things of the kingdom of God, are the things he seeks after, who has the life of righteousness in him.”

“Where the life of righteousness exists, there is a suitableness of the spirit and agreement of the heart to the whole law of God. I beseech you observe this: that the body of righteousness is nothing else but the stamp of God’s law, as it were; there is a proportion and conformity between one and the other. Therefore, in whomever the life of righteousness exists in his spirit, there is a suitableness of disposition to the whole law of God. So that, though there is much antipathy, and deformity, and unlikeness, and disagreement from the law of God, yet notwithstanding, there is something within that soul, that is agreeable to the whole law of God. So that there is no particular part of the commandment of God, that does not find a principle to which it is suited and agreeable in the heart of all those who have the life of righteousness in them. And this, I take it, is the meaning of *writing the law of God in their hearts*; that is, the very law of God in

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all its parts. It has a stamp and impression, and a resemblance in the spirit of all those who have the life of righteousness in them.”

“Wherever there is the life of righteousness, all the fruits of the Spirit — in some part and in some measure — are begun in them. The life of righteousness is not the springing up of one grace, but it is the quickening of the whole body of grace in us. The whole frame of holiness is begun in those who have the life of righteousness. There are all the fruits of the Spirit to be found in that soul. Take the lowest and meanest Christian of all; if he has the life of righteousness, he can find in himself (if he does not judge falsely) at least the buddings and blossomings of the ‘fruits of the spirit’ of God; of that which God requires of his children. And it is a lasting, never dying life. When this life of righteousness is quickened and begun in any believer, it increases and grows up; it never dies or is finally extinguished.”

The works of Mr. Hooker abound in passages like the foregoing, giving delineations of the various duties of the Christian life. He begins with the heart, as the first and great scene of duty. There is to be continually going forward, the performance of the works of holiness, in the certainty that the Christian who is faithful in the *secrecies of his soul*, as under the eye of a holy God, will be faithful in the duties of the *visible life*.

THE CHRISTIAN’S PRIVILEGES. With the same particularity with which he delineates the Christian’s duties, he likewise shows his privileges. He highly prized these means of nourishing the plants of grace in the soul. Of the many examples of this class of instructions to the regenerate, only a few can be given here.

*Timely storing up of the divine promises.* “I would have a good Christian store up all the good promises of God, in all the good word of God, seasonably — I mean, when all your parts and abilities are strong, and nature is able to fight it out; and while the fair day of God’s favor lasts; and while the word and sacraments are dispensed. This is the best time to lay in the promises of God, so that we may not lack them when we have use for them. And we must lay in promises of *all kinds*. It is the wisdom of a man to have something to spare, and a surplus beforehand, so that a man may not live feebly and poorly, and be at his wit’s end at every turn, and not know which way to shift for himself, and have no bread in his house — I mean to have no provision of promises by Him.”

*How to live by faith.* “The Lord brought your unfaithful heart to believe: now labor to husband this grace well; to improve it for your best good, and live by it. It is a marvellously great shame to see those who are born to fair means — I mean the poor saints of God, who have a right and title to grace and Christ — and yet live at such an under-rate. I would have you to live above the world. Though you don’t have a coat to cover you, nor a house to put your head in, yet if you have faith, you are a rich man. It is a shame, I say, to see those who cannot husband that happy estate which they have. They live as if they didn’t have it; so full of want, so full of care and pride, so weak and unable to master their sins. Whereas, the fault is not in the power of faith, nor in the promise, nor in the Lord; for the Lord doesn’t grudge his people of comfort, but would have them live cheerfully, and have strong consolations, and a mighty assurance of God’s love. ‘Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice.’ God has sworn ‘that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us.’ We do the Lord and his promises a great deal of wrong, and bring a bad report upon that grace and mercy of his, when we open the mouths of the wicked, and make them say, ‘Oh, these precise people talk of quiet, and contentment, and joy in the Holy Ghost; there is great *talking* of these things, yet we could never *see* it.’ Oh, brethren, are the riches and revenues of faith so great, that a Christian may live like a man all his days? Let all the drunkards and malicious wretches against God, laugh and be merry; they cannot see even one of those days that a poor saint can, though he lay in prison all his days.”



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*How to make faith limber and quick.* “First we must maintain the evidence of this grace once gotten, without question, undeniable, without control — I say, *faith* once gotten. This must be the care of every man; he must know the nature of faith in general, and of his faith in particular; whether his faith is of the right stamp, and will stand him in stead in the day of account; and whether it is that faith of which Peter speaks (for there is a great deal of counterfeit faith in the world). When you have gained evidence that you have faith, then fill it up, and keep it by you, and labor to have the demonstration of this work so plain in your soul, that it may be past denial. Go to God, and to his word, and to your own soul, and to the ministers of God’s word; and advise wisely and judiciously of your estate; and labor to see sound evidences of the work of grace in your soul; and see them every day, and read them every morning, noon and evening, and keep them by you, and learn them — that when you come to improve your faith, you may not question whether you have it or not. And if you will not be persuaded, yet look to the promise. But if your doubting still comes upon you, and controversy still oppresses you, and is set on foot against you, then reason thus with your own soul: ‘If I don’t have faith or grace, I am sure I will never get it by looking upon my own corruptions and distempers. *Where* shall I have it, then, if I want it? The promise alone must do it.’ Therefore look to that. It is with a doubting man, as it is with a man who is melancholy. If he would but set upon the work, he would see his own folly; and by *going* he would be able to go; and by *speaking* he would be able to speak. So this vain dismay of heart, and these discouragements of a doubting soul, hinder the work of faith more than any other distemper. Therefore, when your fears and discouragements come upon you, go to the promise; and in going, you will be able to go.

“When you have thus *maintained* the clearness of the work of grace that was gained before, then labor to bring your heart to a marvellous stillness and calmness from time to time, so that you may give way to faith, and faith may have its full scope to frame your heart. Staidness and stillness of soul frames the heart to hold the shield [of faith] steadily, and bear the blow comfortably when it comes. Those boisterous affections, those crowds and troops of troublesome imaginations — such as fear and jealousy and superstition — these unrank the frame of the soul, so that faith cannot command it.<sup>1</sup> When it was told to the disciples that Christ had risen from the dead and had manifested himself to them, the text says, ‘They did not believe, for joy, and wondered.’ As it is true of immoderate affection, so it is true of strange fear, and care, and distemper — because they hurry the soul so violently, and transport the soul so that he cannot believe. So it is with a soul troubled with tumultuous thoughts, especially melancholy. And those enemies — of vain imaginations, of fears, and sorrow, and distempered thoughts and cares — that though the heart is willing and able to believe, yet those stirrings of boisterous affections, cross faith in the way, and bear down faith, so that it cannot go on in the way of promise towards God, nor receive help from him. David chides his own heart, Psa 43.5, and rocks it asleep, and would bring it quiet, saying, ‘Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance and my God’ “

Selections might be multiplied to a great extent, illustrative of Mr. Hooker’s peculiarly felicitous manner of setting forth the privileges of the children of God, and the methods by which to maintain their consolations and joys, in the divine life. That ministry is (in one of its best points) a ministry to the edification of the church. It promotes in an evangelical manner, and on solid, scriptural grounds, the happiness of Christians in all their privileges.

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<sup>1</sup> *Originally*, “unrank the soul, that it cannot command faith.” The phrase is from Poor Doubting Christian. If the soul is unranked (like army troops that are routed), it is *disorderly* (uncommanded). Hooker says that in such emotional turmoil, the soul cannot believe — *i.e.*, faith is not in command. What then will restore order and peace to the soul? As he says below (Trials: *pestered thoughts*), we must “eye the promise,” and embrace its truth. Our restored faith in God’s promises, will restore order and peace to our soul. Hence David chides his soul when it is downcast: “*Hope* in God;” that is, “*believe* God’s promise.” Such faith will restore his soul, that it may “live by faith.” (Hab 2.4) — WHG

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THE CHRISTIAN'S TRIALS. In his writings, Mr. Hooker has devoted attention to this subject of trials, as they enter largely into the experience of the children of God. He does this to a greater extent than almost any Christian writer whose works are extant. Passages concerning these trials, as they stand related to the various subjects which he discusses, appear in every part of his writings. The conviction comes upon the reader at almost every step, that the writer himself must have had extensive and unusually deep experiences of them, and must have been an accurate and constant student of them, as they appear to the observing minister in his intercourse with Christians around him. Such graphic delineations as he gives of the Christian's trials, in their various nature and forms, could be given only by one who had himself "endured a great fight of afflictions." (Heb 10.32) It is a circumstance which imparts great value to Mr. Hooker's writings, that he evidently so well understands and appreciates the necessities of the children of God, arising from uncounted and endlessly diversified forms of spiritual affliction. And by his wise, discriminating, and faithful counsels, he seems to have aimed to prepare the Christian for any exigency of the divine life which might arise. The comparative infrequency with which such subjects are treated in religious writings in recent years, will justify the somewhat extensive quotation of passages from Mr. Hooker's writings, under the present classification.

*Advice to a soul pestered with vain thoughts.* "Imagine your heart begins to be pestered with vain thoughts, or with a proud or haughty spirit, or some base lusts and privy haunts of heart; how would you be rid of them? Why, you must *not* set up and pull down, and set up and pull down, quarrel, and contend, and be discouraged. No, but *eye the promise*, and hold fast to it, and say, 'Lord, you have promised all grace to your servants; therefore take this heart, and take this mind, and take these affections; and let your Spirit frame them aright, according to your own good will. By that Spirit of wisdom, Lord, *inform* me. By that Spirit of sanctification, Lord, *cleanse* me from all my corruptions. By that Spirit of grace, Lord, quicken and *enable* me to discharge every holy service.' Thus carry and convey yourself by the power of the Spirit of the Lord; and you will find your heart strengthened and succored by the virtue of it, on all occasions. The text says, Rom 8.2, 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, has made me free from the law of sin and death.'"

*"How we may get help against the stubbornness of our own hearts.* Don't tug at this resistance in your own power, or with any ability that is in you; don't contest with that rebellion in your own strength, for it is certain this will make it *excessively* rebellious. When you to offer violence to yourself, you will be even more cross; indeed, you will grow into a kind of fallenness <sup>1</sup> and fierce opposition against the work of God's grace. Sin becomes sinful beyond measure by the commandment (Rom 7.13);<sup>2</sup> and instead of quarrelling with your sins, you will quarrel with the Almighty, saying to yourself, 'If I do what I can, why shouldn't God help me?'"

"You say, '*What shall I do?*' Come and bring your soul into God's presence; lay yourself down in his sight; and tell the Lord that you are a traitor; and what is worse, you cannot help but be so; *that* is your misery. Make known all the base abominations of your heart and life before the Lord, and all that crossness and opposition that you find in your soul, toward Christ and his grace. Beseech him to take away the treachery and falseness of your heart. Beseech him to do for you what you cannot do for yourself. Tell him that you would choose *not to be*, rather than to be thus treacherous. Tell him that he has said he 'will take away the heart of stone,' Eze 36.26; and that it is not in your power to put it away; and therefore, leave your soul there, beseeching him to make himself known as a God hearing prayers, pardoning sins, and subduing iniquities. Plead the covenant of grace and its promises, that all is freely, and firstly, and wholly from himself; that *He* must *make us his people* — *He* must make us humble and broken-hearted.

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<sup>1</sup> Originally, "fellness" — Old English: struck down, as in, to *fell* a tree.

<sup>2</sup> Rom 7:13 But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.

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Look to Jesus Christ, and beseech the one who ‘has the keys of hell and of death,’ that he would unlock those brazen gates and doors of your heart”

“Do not fear the terror of the truth, so as to sidestep it, and withdraw from its blow; but think of the goodness of it. Though a man fears the bitterness of the pill, yet knowing it is a means of his health, he is willing to take it. So here, when God moves, *you* move; when He stirs, *you* stir. Many a man neglects the stirrings of the Spirit of God, and never has the like again; and then on his deathbed he cries for his old terrors. Oh, therefore when the truth meets you, and stirs you, keep the heart under it, and follow the blow in secret (Psa 139.23-24). Bless God who has opened your eye, and affected your heart in any measure; let your heart lie still under the blow of the truth. Possess yourself with the criticalness and danger of the condition you’re in. Say, ‘In regard to the secrecy and difficulty of the work, how easily I may be deceived; and how dangerous if it is.’ A failure here can never be repaired afterward. If never broken *for* sin, then never broken *from* sin; then never united to Christ; and then you will never see the face of God in glory. Think how many have miscarried in this place. As when the mariner sees the mast of a ship [in the water], he fathoms the water and tacks about, and looks around him, ‘lest,’ he says, ‘we too split upon the rocks.’ So you must look to yourself here. Thousands have sunk and split themselves here, and you’re in danger. Know that if you miscarry here, you are undone forever.”

**Reasonings** *with a sin-seeing and distressed soul.* “In Christ are all the treasures of all mercy and all compassion, of all grace and salvation — whatever is needful for us, and may be beneficial to those who believe in him, and rest upon him in a true and lively faith. And though the soul may think this treasure is spent, and this fountain of compassion and mercy has dried up, and says, ‘Can my sins be pardoned, and my corruptions subdued?’ — Christ prevents this also. We may spend what we will; there is still enough to spend. Eph 3.8, *There are unsearchable riches in Christ*; as if to say, ‘You know no end, and you find no bottom of the vileness of your heart, that pollutes and defiles you. Yet there is no end of the riches of Christ, no bottom of the ocean-sea of God’s mercy that may comfort you and relieve you upon all occasions. Christ received the Spirit above measure,’ John 3: 34 — as if Christ would preclude the quibbles of a poor creature, and pluck up a discouraged heart. When the sinner thinks, ‘My sins are sinful beyond measure, and my heart is hard beyond measure’ — why, think and remember that in Christ there is mercy that is merciful beyond measure, and grace that is powerful beyond measure.”

*Satan’s temptations to the Christian to despair.* “A desperate kind of despair and discouragement sometimes oppresses the soul of the distressed sinner. The soul looks upon his own corruptions, and unworthiness, and sinfulness — and then he dares not come to Christ. He views the number of his sins as so many; the nature of his abominations as so heinous; and the continuance of them for so long; that the soul of a distressed man sends his thoughts far off. He views it all — both the abominations of his life and the distempers of his soul — and sees his iniquities mustering themselves up. And Satan helps him with that; for this is his policy. First he keeps a sinner such that he won’t see his sin; and then all will be whole, and the sinner thinks, ‘There is mercy enough in the Savior; why should I trouble myself?’ But when Satan sees the sinner pore over his sins, then, Satan ensures he will see nothing else *but* sin; so that he dares not go to God for mercy. Now, tell the sinner in this case, that mercy is in Christ, and redemption is offered in a Savior, and he dares not hear of it; he dares not think of it. ‘What,’ he says, ‘should I even once think or imagine that there is any mercy for me? that I have any title to, or interest in Christ? *That* would be strange.’ And here the soul is foiled; he is fastened on his own misery, and never goes to the Physician. He stares into the wound, and never goes to the Savior. For a man is as well kept from going to Christ by continually poring over his distempers by despair, as he is by resting on his own sufficiency by presumption. This is the course of Satan, and he is marvellously cunning in it.”

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“But this should not be any discouragement to our hearts from coming to the Lord Jesus Christ. For whom did Christ come into the world? For whom did Christ die? When he came, it was not for ‘the righteous;’ they didn’t need him; but for the sinners who had condemned themselves. He came to save those that could not save themselves. ‘This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.’ There is a fountain set open for all people to wash in — all sorts of sins, and all sorts of sinners. Be they what they *will* be; be they what they *can* be; their sins be ever so great, the time ever so long, and the heinousness ever so vile, *Come*; those who will, *Come* — *Come*, and *welcome!*”

*Why God has left sin in the hearts of his saints on earth.* “It is but to serve you, like the Canaanites who were left in Canaan. ‘They shall not reign over you,’ says God. ‘They shall be tributaries to you.’ I speak this to the comfort only of those who are the Lord’s. You are priests to God the Father, and you must have sacrifices to offer up to God. Whenever you mortify a sin, it is as pleasing a sacrifice to God, as if you offered up an ox or a sheep. Your sins do more to further your grace than anything else. They help you to draw the water of godly sorrow, of true repentance. They help you to prize the mercies of the Lord Jesus Christ; they help you to humility, to meekness, to a spirit of compassion toward others. Be of good comfort, therefore — if your sins are grieved, striven against, labored against, they further your reward for all eternity. Be exhorted, therefore, to fight against your sins. You who are one of Christ’s, what cause can be better than yours — the cause of Christ against the Devil? What greater assurance can there be of obtaining the victory, seeing that God himself is engaged in the quarrel. The word has gone out of his mouth, ‘For sin shall not have dominion over you.’ Oh, stand firm then against sin. Never yield the bucklers to your corruptions that make hard upon you. Make the battle fresh and strong against your lusts. Though you are foiled again and again, never give up the conflict! For God has said it, and his word shall never fall to the ground, ‘Sin *shall not* have dominion over you.’ He has engaged himself in the cause. And if God is true, and able to keep sin from reigning over you, then in the end, you are sure to have the victory fall on your side.”

*The workings of a soul under saving godly sorrow.* “The heart is most of all weary of the burden of sin, *as it is sin*; and thinks it the greatest burden in the world. As a man who has a great burden on his back, twists this way and that; and if he cannot remove it, yet he will ease it — so the heart uses all means, and takes all courses, so that if possible, it may cast off and ease itself of the vileness and plague of sin. This wearisomeness of soul, which follows the weight of sin, makes itself known thus: — his eye is ever upon it; his mouth is ever speaking of it; he is always complaining against it; and he is readily content to be ashamed for it. He will never meddle with, nor give way to anything that is sinful. The soul will not dare to tamper with anything sinful. Why? because it has been wearied with the burden of it before. When the soul sees sin, *as it is sin*, and that it is a burden to the soul, and the heart is now weary of it — it will lay no more weight upon it, because the heart is weary enough already. Once a man has been at death’s door by drinking deadly poison, he will never taste it again. Indeed, he won’t endure the *sight* of that cup. He would rather fare hardly and starve, than eat and drink what will kill him. ‘So (says the soul), it is sin that has made a separation between me and my God; — it would have been the death of me if God had not been merciful to me; and therefore I would rather sink and die, than meddle with these sins any more.’”

*Reproof to religious despondency.* “This doctrine, ‘You are not under the law, but under grace,’ affords sharp reprehension to all those who are the children of God, and find themselves so, by a testimony from their own spirits and from God’s Spirit — and yet, notwithstanding this, they lead lives that are uncomfortable and lumpish. You are in Christ! And yet, are you discouraged or disheartened, either with corruption or with guilt? How unworthy you walk, of that condition you are in. ‘You are not under the law, but under grace.’ Why is it, then, that you are as much dejected and discouraged as if you were ‘under *the law*,’ and *not* ‘under grace’? What is it that makes you disconsolate and discouraged, if the condition you are in, may administer much more

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comfort to you? Are you full of sin? Yet, notwithstanding, you are in a condition in which all sin shall be pardoned. Is your obedience imperfect? Yet you are in a condition in which imperfect obedience will be accepted, and frailties covered. Do you find that God commands you much, and you do but little? Yet, you are in a condition in which the Lord has promised (so that you will use the means, and trust upon him) to make you able, in an acceptable manner, to do all that he bids you to do. Does the law threaten? Does the law curse? Yet you are in a condition in which neither the threatening, nor the curse of the law, shall ever reach you to condemnation. Do you find mighty rebellions in your nature, against the law of God? Yet you are in a condition in which a new nature is promised, which will be conformable, and subjected to the law of God.

“Therefore, what would make you hang your head down? Such Christians are to be sharply reprov’d, that being ‘in Christ,’ they lead lives as if they were *out* of Christ. Don’t you make the world think that what Christ says is false, ‘for my yoke is easy and my burden is light’? If Christ’s yoke is easy and his burden is light, then ‘Why is it (says the world) that the servants of Christ walk so disconsolately, and complain of heavy burdens?’

“Indeed, I don’t deny that it becomes Christians to mourn; and that those who don’t mourn, will not rejoice in the day of judgment; and that the people of God are ‘mourners in Zion.’ Yet, what kind of mourning is it? There is a double sorrow: a ‘godly sorrow,’ and a ‘worldly sorrow.’ A godly sorrow is when a soul melts into tears upon the consideration of his sins and wants, because he believes that through Christ, God will accept him, notwithstanding them all. *This* sorrow, the more of it the better. This sorrow mellows the heart; softens the heart; makes it frameable to the impressions of the word of God. But now, the *other* sorrow, which is a worldly sorrow, is when a soul is beaten out of heart because of sins formerly committed; and because of mighty corruptions that annoy him, to mourn *without* hope and confidence of being accepted. *This* is worldly sorrow, and it causes death. This is altogether unbecoming of Christians. Receive now this sharp reprehension, and be humbled for it, and labor to remember your condition. ‘*You have not come Mount Sinai, but to Mount Zion;*’ ‘*You are not under the law, but under grace.*’ Therefore, ‘*rejoice in the Lord, always;*’ and be so cheerful that the world may see that the service of Christ is a *sweet* service.”

Mr. Hooker in these examples, and in numerous other portions of his writings, exerts himself very skillfully, and with great kindness and fidelity, to meet and relieve the spiritual troubles of true Christians. At the same time, he makes a most thorough and searching work in dealing with the consciences of Christians for their sins. He leaves no proper means untried to help them to see how their sins have brought on their perplexities. For example:

“When the saints fall into some gross sin, or else made a truce with some bosom corruption, though but an infirmity; then God withdraws his presence. For obedience is the term of God’s presence. 2Chr 15.2, ‘He is with us while we are with him.’ If then, the saints break company, it is no marvel that Christ withdraws his society, Joh 15.4-10.<sup>1</sup> This is the tenure of Christ’s manifestation: provided we love him. But if not, he is gone. Psal 51.10, ‘Create a new spirit within me,’ as if to say, all is to begin anew. God does this to show his indignation against sin. He will not bear nor bolster it; no, not in his own. And God does this, not only when they sin foully, but when they make a truce with a distemper, though but an infirmity. For example, if a Christian is overtaken habitually with an angry distemper; if a Christian is eager for the world, or grows dead in his services; it is God’s justice that these men be destitute of their comforts.”

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<sup>1</sup> Joh 15:4-10 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. <sup>5</sup> "I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned... <sup>9</sup> "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. <sup>10</sup> "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love..."

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While Mr. Hooker thus treated the duties and trials of the Christian, and dealt with his conscience and his fears in relation to his short-comings or sins, Mr. Hooker was also accustomed to set before him the ENCOURAGEMENTS derivable from “the good word of God.” His pages abound with passages, rich in instruction and ministrations to the good courage of the true Christian, on such topics as the following: The cause of the Christian against sin, the cause of Christ; encouragement to those burdened with sin; God’s faithfulness dispensing his fatherly love to his children; strong and invincible consolation from all the faithful performances of the Lord; that the believer is to be one with the holy and blessed God; Christ is able to resist and vanquish, when his people cannot; the happiness of being in heaven, to behold the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ; our union and communion with Christ, “the top of our happiness in heaven.” Such topics as these he unfolds, illustrates, and applies, for the encouragement of the true child of God. He does it in such fullness, clearness, and sweetness, that it is excellently fitted to make the believer both joyful, and at the same time humble — that with such “strong consolations,” he yet lives so far below his proper standard of both Christian fidelity and enjoyment.

While many of the passages which have been quoted from the writings of Mr. Hooker, imply that he had a deep and various experience as a Christian, numerous other passages might be given which show that he had such experience in no ordinary degree. His heart as the seat of such experiences, is evidently and fully in his trains of thought, so as to remark on such topics as the following: The free and full confession of sin by the contrite; sorrow for sin makes us set a high value upon Christ; the effect of brokenness of heart on our views of this world; the vileness of sinful thoughts; how a contrite sinner prizes and covets deliverance from sin; faith waiting on the will of God; the feelings of those rightly affected under a faithful ministry, towards those who exercise a faithful ministry; and numerous other experiential topics.

The attentive reader of his writings meets with a great many passages which indicate the closeness and care with which he was accustomed to study the unrenewed heart, in its ever-varying workings, against the truth and the Spirit of God. He also exposes with a masterly hand, the cavils, objections, and subterfuges by which men in an unregenerate state, set themselves against what the gospel proposes to the guilty, and its requirements of duty on the conscience. He drives the sinner from one refuge to another, with skill, fidelity, seriousness, and urgency; and yet with a manifest kindness and warm desire to see him flee to the refuge provided at the foot of “the cross.” He never *wrangles* with the unregenerate man; but he bears down upon him, in that union of solemnity and love for his soul, which in the pulpit must have often overwhelmed his hearers.

The writings of this skillful instructor show him to have been very critically discriminating and accurate in his whole treatment of the great subject of the *evidences of grace*. And that he was accustomed to set in very clear contrast with each other, the genuine and the spurious in religious profession. Illustrations of this statement might be given in passages from his works on such points for discrimination, such as the following:

the difference between the outwardly reformed, and the inwardly renewed; the different ways in which godly and worldly sorrow drive men; the difference between true and false confessions of sin; comparing selfish and evangelical sorrow for sin; the two operations of *sorrow* for sin, and *hatred* of sin; the way for an unrenewed man to know what is his taste; false means for curing sorrow for sin; the difference between the weight of sin, seen simply as a subject for punishment, and seen as an infinite evil before God; the skill of the hypocrite in deceiving men, even the ministers of the gospel — the *treacherous* hypocrite; the *complaining* hypocrite; the *discouraged* hypocrite; the *lazy* hypocrite; the judicious, but *self-deceived* professor; the *terrified* hypocrite — and the uselessness of the Christian ministry to hypocrites.

There frequently occur in the writings of Mr. Hooker, passages which relate to the Christian ministry; especially the manner in which its duties are to be conducted. These explain the peculiar characteristics of his own methods of preaching. Such passages are found, sometimes in the form

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of fraternal counsels and exhortations to his brethren — sometimes in the form of explanation to hearers generally, of the proper principles for the exercise of the ministry. Some of his topics of this class are the following: ministerial self-application of preaching; ministerial cultivation of faith; how a powerful ministry is evinced; the utter powerlessness of the ministry without the accompanying influences of the Holy Spirit; description of a pointless ministry; and of a “needle-headed ministry;”<sup>1</sup> the fault of generalizing in preaching; how to carry ourselves towards those who are wounded for their sins; the fearful import of God’s word in its applications to sinners, and as it affects the heart of the minister; how to know a faithful minister; and many other like topics.

A minister entertaining such views as Mr. Hooker cherished, on such subjects as these — acting upon them with the fidelity in which he appears to have acted; and by weight of talent and elevation of Christian character such as his; *qualified* to act by his influence on the minds of his brethren in the sacred office — this must have been of inestimable worth to both the ministry and the churches of his time. Would that he might live again, in the influence of his works upon our own and yet coming generations!

Next to the grace of God that was abundantly imparted to this Father in the ranks of the Puritans, to explain the reasons for his peculiar excellence and success in the sacred office, we place the fact that he PREACHED THE BIBLE. He could have preached philosophy, had there been occasion for it; and brought forth an abundance from the treasures of science and learning, with which he was familiar, and knew how to use in their proper place. But he adhered to that apostolic injunction, “PREACH THE WORD.” He seems to have written every sermon, and sentence of a sermon, with his Bible open beside him; and to have traced every line of truth by the light shining from its holy pages. He makes great use of the language of Scripture in his sermons. His explanations and expositions of the meaning of Scripture are those of both the scholar and the devout Christian. When he has unfolded the meaning of his text, he employs it as a spiritual magnet, to attract together multitudes of other Scripture passages belonging to the subject in hand. And he so sets them all along in his discourse, that they make his path of thought and reasoning shine. His unfoldings of Scripture thought are natural, simple, clear, and often beautiful.

In his methods of illustration and exemplification, he is appropriate and skillful. He draws most of these from the facts of Scripture history, and from the developments of human nature in society and the world at large. It strikes us as remarkable that, with all his learning, there is scarcely a classical allusion to be found in all his pages of pulpit matter; nor is a fact of any kind employed, which might be out of the circle of the reading and knowledge of his hearers. His aim appears to have been to be *understood*, so that his preaching might be *felt*. And from all that appears in the history of his preaching, by contemporaries and others, he effectually secured that object. Sometimes, it is true, his illustrations are quaint and quaintly expressed. He also has the peculiarity of the old writers of his time (and of some more recent), that his illustrations of the various workings of depravity and impenitence are drawn from certain scenes, and certain vices and forms of profligacy and irreligion, which the taste and habits of our own times do not often bring into notice in the pulpits of our own country. And the decent, and respectable, and moral, and intelligent sinners of many a New England congregation, might think such illustrations, if used now, would be helpful in keeping the truth from disturbing their consciences, inasmuch as they are not vicious and profligate and shameless in their *visible* life. But for the purposes which he had in view under the circumstances of his ministry, as exercised in England especially, and probably in Holland, even such illustrations must have carried with them great force.

The style of Mr. Hooker’s writings, regarded as being substantially that of his pulpit discourses, has the prime excellencies sought by all men whose aim is to instruct and reach the conscience

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<sup>1</sup> Needle-headed men who are sharp and eagle-sighted, in search of secrets,” etc.

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and the heart. He appears to think of little else in his use of language, than to employ words which, with the least possible impediment, will carry his thoughts into the minds of his hearers. Rarely is he diffuse. And in general, there is a terseness and force in his methods of expression, that are well worthy of study and imitation by the young preacher. With the description of his manner of pulpit delivery before our minds (quoted in a former chapter); and reading his discourses, so simple in style, so scriptural, so rich in thought and forcible in description and illustration; and keeping in mind in association with these, his deep and strong feelings, and his fervent devotion — it is no mystery that he was followed, venerated, and loved, as an eloquent and powerful preacher of “the gospel of Christ.” As was said of a more recent and effective preacher, it might be said with equal truth of Thomas Hooker: “whoever saw him in the pulpit, saw a man in earnest.”

In the application of his subjects to the minds of his hearers, Mr. Hooker had the habit of the Puritan preachers of his time, of dividing the concluding portions of his discourses into *Uses*. But it was with this difference: he gave himself a much wider range in the terms he employed in stating them. Among his discourses will be found, variously distributed, *Uses* such as the following: “Use of Instruction;” “of Comfort;” “of Direction;” “of Exhortation;” “of Reprehension;” “of Reproof;” “of Terror;” “of Examination;” “of Wonderment;” “of Admiration;” “of Thankfulness;” “of Trial;” “of Assurance;” “of Patience;” and “of Humiliation.” His remarkable skill in thus applying truth to his hearers, led one of his brethren to say of him, that “he was the best at a *Use*, of any preacher he ever knew.” While these methods of concluding discourses have an appearance of art and stiffness to modern tastes — still, as we read on in the writings of Hooker, and perceive what powerful uses he makes of his subjects; there is such a richness in the matter, such skill in its application for its legitimate purposes; such closeness, solemnity, and adaptation to reach and move the inmost feelings of the heart, that the peculiarity of the term *Use* is forgotten. And we find ourselves occupied with the work which the preacher is doing with his subject, upon the minds of his hearers.



## Chapter 8. Church Polity and Discipline.

Different writers on Congregational Church Polity. Results of their discussions. Hooker's "Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline." Spirit as a controversial writer.

IT was a natural consequence of the secession of our Puritan ancestors from the established church, that both in England and in this country they should early on have taken up Ecclesiastical Polity as a subject for earnest inquiry. Their love of the Scriptures as the great depository of divine instruction, naturally led them to "search the Scriptures" daily, that they might learn from there what is the Constitution of the Church of Christ. With all the respect they felt for the established Church of England, in consideration of the things which were good and right in it, and of their former membership in it; and with all their reverence for the good men who remained in it, *and* in the ranks of Conformity; they still acted upon that great principle taught by the Lord Jesus Christ, "*And call no man on earth 'master;' for one is your Master, the Christ; and all you are brethren.*"

It was to be expected that different men among the New England Fathers, should have written books setting forth the results of their inquiries. It was their privilege, and their duty. And liberty to write, teach, and publish their views on this great subject, must have been one of their sources of enjoyment as time passed on with them, in this land of peace and religious freedom. We find their works on Church Polity, therefore, in such number, and of such ability, as to assure us that the Puritan Fathers were no idlers; nor were they disposed to spare study, research, pains, and labor, in discussing a subject of such magnitude, and so deeply involving their liberty of conscience, their order, comfort and spiritual prosperity. They did not discuss this subject so much for their brethren still residing in England, as for themselves. The good fathers and brethren in England could take care of the interests of the subject for themselves. The New England churches and ministers had their own wants to provide for, such as laying foundations for a new community of the followers of Christ, and for a nation which was to be born.

In the catalogues of the various writings of the Chief Fathers of New England, we find numerous books on Congregational Church Polity. Among them were COTTON'S *Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*; Cotton's *Way of the Churches; and that Way Cleared*; also his *Holiness of Church Members, proving that visible saints are the matter of the church*; DAVENPORT'S *Powers of Congregational Churches*; SAMUEL MATHER'S *Apology for the Liberties of the Churches of New England*; *Discourse concerning Baptism and the Consociation of Churches*; *the Powers of the Pastor in administering the Sacraments*; *A Dissertation concerning the right of the Sacraments*; *Answer of the Elders of the New England Churches, to Nine Positions*; *Answer of the same to Thirty-two Questions* — both these last attributed to RICHARD MATHER; also his *Answer to Herle, in Defence of the Way of Congregational Church Government*; *New England Brethren's Ratio Disciplinæ*; and THOMAS SHEPARD'S *Discourse, tending to clear up the Old Way of Christ in the Churches of New England*.

Besides these books by good men in New England, the great interests of Congregational Church Polity were promoted in England by JOHN OWEN'S *Enquiry into the Origin, Nature, Institution, Power, Order and Communion of Evangelical Churches*; DR. WILLIAM AMES' *Fresh Suit against Ceremonies*; BARTLET'S *Model of the Church Way*; and others.

These strong men, on both sides of the Atlantic, were not likely to make any half-way work of discussing a subject which had such a hold on their hearts, and so involved their rights, and called for the outlay of their powers. There was everything in their circumstances to drive them to their Bibles and to their closets, in their search for light. Especially moving them to such resorts, was the preciousness of the privileges they sought, and the value of which privileges they had learned in the old country, and in the severe school of ecclesiastical oppression and persecution. If ever Christian men were certain to evolve and settle great first principles, to state them justly, and defend them ably and courageously, *these* were the men.

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Nor were they doing a work which would account for the future interests of Congregationalism alone, in this country. They were discussing and settling great principles which were to be for the use and benefit of other denominations of Christians who were to have existence in this country; who were to live under our republican form of government; and who would deem it their privilege to exist, and to enjoy their rights as Christians and as men, without being amenable to Episcopal authority, or being dependent for their privileges in the word and ordinances of the New Testament, upon the ministrations of Episcopal hands.

One further remark: the principles of Congregationalism, thus early discussed, and thus ably and earnestly defended and brought into contact with the New England mind,<sup>1</sup> both in and out of the churches were, in truth, the principles derived from the word of God itself. These were to come into use for the good of the free State, as well as for the free Churches. The *republicanism* of the Bible pervaded the writings of those devoted men, on Church Polity. The grand elements of our national Constitution and Government were found by them, in their studies of this subject. They brought them forth to the acceptance of the men of the civil State; and those elements came into powerful action in the country, long before the arrival of that great crisis, the American Revolution. They appeared in the Declaration of Independence, and have been embodied in our national and State Constitutions. These general remarks will be found illustrated, while we proceed to give some account of Mr. Hooker's "*Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline*."

A brief history of this book is appropriate here, and will be given as contained in the prefatory Epistle to the Reader. It was signed by Edward Hopkins and William Goodwin, brethren in the church of which Mr. Hooker was pastor, in Hartford, and dated October 28, 1647:

"The present discourse was finished by himself, in the time of his life, and sent nearly two years ago, to be made public; but the Lord, in whose hands are all our works and ways, determined otherwise. That sad Providence was entertained by him in reference to the present work, with much contentedness and humble submission to the good pleasure of the Most High. And if he might have enjoyed the liberty of his own judgment and desires, no further discoveries of his labors would have been made to the world, and they would have been buried in everlasting silence. But at last he was overborne, and condescended to what now is again advanced — though before the full transcribing, he was translated from us, to 'be forever with the Lord.' The reader may well conceive, had the judicious author lived to peruse the copy now sent, the work would have been more complete, and perhaps some additions made in some parts of it. But we have not yet had the happiness to find among his papers, what was intended of that kind."

"The sad Providence," to which allusion is made in the preceding extract, was the loss of the ship in which the book was first sent, with all the voyagers. "The first fair and full copy of this book was drowned on its passage to England, with many serious and eminent Christians, who were buried (by shipwreck) in the ocean." The reflection, by his friend, Rev. Thomas Goodwin of England, in his Introduction, is added here:

"The destiny which has attended this book has visited my thoughts with an apprehension of something like an omen to the cause itself — that after overwhelming it with a flood of obloquies and disadvantages, misrepresentations, injurious representations, and injurious oppressions cast out after it — it might again be emergent, in the time which 'God has put in his own power.'"

"I have looked for this: that this truth and all that should be said of it, was ordained as of Christ, of whom every truth is a ray, to be like seed corn which, 'unless it falls to the ground and dies,' and this perhaps with some of the persons who profess it, it does not bring forth much fruit."

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<sup>1</sup> For further study, I highly recommend Perry Miller's book, *The New England Mind in the 17th c.* (Belnap Press, of Harvard U. Press, Cambridge, Mass, 1939) — "a topical analysis of various leading ideas in colonial New England... concerned with defining and classifying the principal concepts of the Puritan mind in New England." — WHG

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His own opinion of the book is given here also, by Rev. Mr. Goodwin, who superintended its publication in England:

“As touching this treatise and its worthy author, I do not intend to preface anything by commendation of either to the reader; that indeed, would be to lay paint on burnished marble, or add light to the sun.”

The full title of the book in question is as follows:

“A Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline. Wherein the way of the Churches of New England is warranted out of the word, and all Exceptions of weight, which are made against it, answered; Whereby also it will appear to the Judicious Reader, that something more must be said, than has yet been, before their Principles can be shaken, or they should be unsettled in their practice. By Tho. Hooker, late Pastor of the Church at Hartford upon Connecticut in New England.

Isa 62.1. For Zion’s sake I will not hold my tongue; and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest; until the righteousness thereof breaks forth as the light, and the salvation thereof as a burning lamp.  
1Cor 13.8. For we can do nothing *against* the truth, but *for* the truth.”

This work was printed in London, in 1648. Like nearly all the other works of the author, it has never had a republication in this country, and is now very rarely to be found. Its importance among our early works on the subject, and not having been reprinted for more than two hundred years, will justify a particular description of it.

Mr. Hooker defines *Ecclesiastical Polity* to be “a skill of ordering the affairs of Christ’s House, according to his word.” The positions which he maintains, given as nearly as practicable in his own language, are as follows:

- That Christ is the Head of the Church, by his spiritual influence, and by his special guidance in the means and dispensation of his ordinances.
- That the Church is composed of believers, professing the Christian Faith, and by voluntary consent and covenant, yielding subjection to that government of Christ which he has prescribed in his word.
- That the government of the Church comprises the dispensation, by its proper officers, of preaching, prayer, seals and censures, and the conduct of the affairs of the Church generally, according to the provisions and rules of God’s word.
- That the institution of the Church issues from the special appointment of God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ as its head, by the Holy Ghost sent and working to that end.
- That visible saints only, are fit matter appointed by God to compose a visible Church of Christ; the judgment respecting who are such, is to be made in the judicious exercise of Christian charity.
- That what gives constitution and being to a visible Church, is the mutual covenanting and confederating of the saints, in the fellowship of the faith, according to the order of the gospel.
- That profession is the public manifestation of our assent to the doctrine of faith, as in word delivered and received by us; and our resolution to persist in the maintenance of the same.
- That the Church of visible saints, confederating together to walk in the fellowship of the Faith, being thus the essence or substance of the Church, precedes all officers.
- That in the New Testament, Congregational Churches only, are of Christ’s appointment and institution.
- That Ecclesiastical Power, under the scripture name of “the keys of the kingdom of heaven,” is supreme and monarchical as it resides in Christ; and is subordinate and delegated, as it is a right given by commission from Christ to fit persons, to act in his house according to his order;

## Chapter 8. Church Polity and Discipline.

this last being in the many when combined; or in one, when it is given to him by the election of the many.

- That the government of the Church in regard to the people, is Democratical; in regard to the elders or rulers chosen by the people, Aristocratical; in regard to Christ alone and truly, Monarchical;
- That to the ministry and guides of the visible Church the Lord Jesus has committed “the keys;” *i.e.* the power delegated from himself to dispense and administer the holy things of his house, according to his will prescribing the order.
- That a Council of Churches is an assembly of Pastors, and of Delegates or Commissioners, duly qualified in Christian character, gifts, and knowledge.
- That Church Communion implies community among Christians in receiving and enjoying the ordinances of Christ dispensed by his ministers.
- That for the offices of the Church, there is required a visible company of Christians who must concur and consent to call tried and approved persons, to bear office among them; consisting of Pastors, Teachers, and Ruling Elders; these instituted by election and ordination, and having their prescribed duties.
- That a Bishop, or *Episcopus*, is threefold. Either 1. *Divinus*, as, by divine institution and according to the word of Christ, “set in the Church:” or 2. *Humanus*, as by consent of the assembled Pastors and Delegates called to preside or moderate in their sessions: or 3. *Satanicus*; such an *Episcopus* as the enemy Satan, acting the pride and suiting the sovereignty of the spirits of men, has by a mysterious way, successively and secretly brought into the Church; so that he might midwife Antichrist into the world; and while the Pope, as universal Bishop, is “the Man of Sin,” the Bishop, especially when he has mounted into the Archbishop’s chair, is *the Child of sin*, or “the Man of Sin” in his childhood; appropriating to himself to be sole Rector, Pastor, and Judge.
- That the duty of officers in the Church is to bestow their whole man, and their whole strength, and study, upon their weighty and worthy work; receiving their maintenance from the provisions of the Church to that end.
- That the office of Deacon is to husband the estate and temporals of the Church; faithfully to keep, prudently to dispense and dispose it, to such uses and persons as shall be required by the Church; to provide elements for the Lord’s table, and to provide for the poor, and to dispense whatever the Church put into his hands for “him that ministers.”
- That ordination is an adjunct to election, consequent and consummating; and is the solemn introduction of a minister already elected, into the free exercise of the functions of his office; approving and solemnly confirming him in his office, by prayer and the laying on of hands.
- That the dispensing of ordination pertains to the teaching Elders, under authority of “the presbytery.”
- That the term *Independent*, in its fair and inoffensive sense, imports that every particular Church, rightly constituted and completed, has sufficiency in itself to exercise all the ordinances of Christ.
- That the work which is of common concern to the members of the Church when not convened, is that watch which they stand engaged to express to each other, for the good of the body so confederate.
- That the members of the same Church have special power over one another, by virtue of their covenant; and in case of offences by brethren, we have express law from Christ, by which we are bound to pursue to conviction, and are also charged to prevent and to seek the removal of all taint of sin.

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- That in the examination and admission of members, the rule according to which satisfaction is to be regulated concerning their qualifications, is done in this way; if a person does not live in the commission of any known sin, nor in the neglect of any known duty, and can give a reason for his hope towards God — this is cause, with judicious charity, to hope and believe there is something of God and grace in the soul, and therefore fitness for Church society.
- That in the reception of members from other Churches, on their recommendation, the testimony of any Church of Christ ought to be accepted according to the worth of it, and received with all the respect the spouse of Christ is due.
- That those who have the right to *administer* the sacraments, are those called to it by God's command, and the allowance and designation of the Church; viz. Pastors and Teachers; and those who have right, by rule and allowance of Christ to *receive* the sacraments, are those who have come to ripeness of years, and are rightly received, and stand members of the visible Church.
- That the children of those who are members of the Church are to be baptized.
- That the sacraments must be dispensed publicly, in the presence and with the concurrence of the Church solemnly assembled.
- That Baptism is the sacrament of our institution and engrafting into Christ.
- That the Lord's Supper is the sacrament of our nourishment and our growing up in the Lord Jesus; and therefore is appointed by him to be frequently used.
- That the Lord Jesus Christ has appointed Church censures, to purge out that which is evil; and that herein the members of the same Church proceed not only Christianly, but judicially, against offences.
- That offenses are either private, as known to one or more; or public, as famous and notorious in practice.
- That where we have not found ground for conviction, we have no reason to administer an admonition.
- That excommunication, being an ordinance of so great terror, must be proceeded in with much moderation, pity, patience, and long-suffering; it must not be hasty, nor for small aberrations, but for evils which are either heinous or abominable.
- That the highest tribunal where the sentence of excommunication issues, consists of the fraternity or brotherhood of the Church.
- That the sentence issued, is to be solemnly passed and pronounced upon the delinquent, by the ruling Elder; whether it is the sentence of admonition or of excommunication.
- That the consociation of Churches is not only lawful but very useful; keeping in mind, nevertheless, that they are of limited power; that their judgments are to be regulated by the rules of Christ, from whom their power comes; and that their authority, designed by Christ, is the authority of Church *counsel*; rather than the authority of Church *jurisdiction*, as is held by some.
- That a Synod is an ecclesiastical meeting, by communication and combination; consisting of fit persons, called by the Churches and sent as their messengers, to discover and determine of doubtful cases, either in doctrine or practice, according to truth; and having power to set down their judgments clearly and definitively; not to leave the Churches from which they are sent, in doubts and demurs; they dogmatize their sentences, and set down their determinations as sure truths, to their judgments and apprehensions; and so return them to the Churches from which they came; and their determinations take place, not because they concluded so, but because the Churches approved of what they have determined; but they do not have power to inflict censures, nor to impose their canons or conclusions upon the Churches.

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It is proper here to note and correct an error appearing in Hanbury's "Historical Memorials."<sup>1</sup> It is relative to the authorship of the "Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline," of which an account has now been given. Mr. Hanbury states that it is the *joint* work of Hooker and Cotton; and it gives the title of the volume on which he has founded his opinion. A copy of the same book in the Library of the Old South Church, Boston, is found to be neither more nor less than Hooker's "Survey," and Cotton's "Way of the Churches Cleared;" bound together between the same covers, with a general title page adapted to the united contents of the volume. But the two works themselves bear all the evidences, internal and external, of *separate* authorship, which ever appear in the cases of any books written by different men.

Unfortunately for Mr. Cotton, as well as Mr. Hooker, Mr. Hanbury — while he devotes between fifty and sixty pages to an account of what he entitles "Hooker's and Cotton's Survey" — he yet closes his chapters on the book without any account of Cotton's "Way of the Churches Cleared." It is to be hoped that in future editions of the "Historical Memorials," justice will be done to these New England Fathers, by the correction of the error respecting the joint authorship of "the Survey," and by the addition of a fair account of Cotton's "Way of the Churches Cleared;" giving "honor to whom honor is due."<sup>2</sup>

This being the only work in which Mr. Hooker appears as a controversial writer,<sup>3</sup> here is the place to remark on his character and habits in the conduct of a religious controversy.

His candor is eminently manifest. Of his principal opponent, Rev. Samuel Rutherford, Professor of Divinity in the University of St. Andrews, in Scotland, he observes, in his preface,

"Among those worthies whose pens and pains the Lord has been pleased to improve, Mr. Rutherford has deserved much for his indefatigable diligence; a man of eminent abilities; the depth of whose judgment, and sharpness in dispute, is evidenced beyond all exception, by that accurate and elaborate piece of his, *Apologetical Exercitations*, in which he appears to be *Malleus Jesuitarum*;<sup>4</sup> and their factors and followers, the Arminians, who receive their errors by wholesale from them and retail them out again in their particular treatises. And for these pains of his, I suppose the Churches will (I must profess for my own part, I do) owe him much. And therefore it was a pleasant providence, when I perceived by some books put forth of late, that he addressed himself seriously to debate Church Discipline; — a subject of special difficulty, but also of special advantage to the truth, and of help in the present times in which we live."

Of Mr. Hudson also, from whose views on the subject of a "Church Catholic Visible," Mr. Hooker felt constrained to dissent. Yet he says,

"Master Hudson is a learned man, and a faithful minister of the gospel. When I had considered his writing, twice and thrice, I found his judgment sharp and scholastical, his spirit Christian and moderate, his expression succinct and pregnantly plain to express his own apprehensions. So that my heart was much contented with the acumen and judicious diligence of the author. Though I could not consent to what he wrote, yet I could not help but unfeignedly prize the learning, perspicuity, and painfulness expressed in his writing."

Mr. Hooker's spirit appears kind and courteous, even while carrying forward the most masterly refutations of the positions of his opponents. He is at the furthest from anything proud and overbearing. He makes good, throughout his book, that which he says in his preface:

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<sup>1</sup> Published under the auspices of the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

<sup>2</sup> The above statement indicates to the reader the source of the mistake relative to the authorship of the "Survey," which appears in the Life of Mr. Cotton, vol. I, p. 269, of this series.

<sup>3</sup> Most of his works are "Practical" (pastoral), not "Controversial" (apologetic or polemical). — WHG

<sup>4</sup> *Malleus Jesuitarum*: "in the Mall of the Jesuits" — a colorful way to describe a place in which Roman Catholic doctrines are bought and sold, as for example, by the Arminians. — WHG

## Chapter 8. Church Polity and Discipline.

“In handling all these particulars, so full of difficulty and obscurity, I am not such a stranger at home, that I am not easily sensible of the weight of the matter, and of my own weakness; and therefore I can profess in a word of truth, that against my own inclination and affection, I was haled by importunity to so hard a task as this, to kindle my rush candle,<sup>1</sup> to join with the light of others; or at least to give them occasion to set up their lamps.”

He most conscientiously aimed *not* to misunderstand his opponent, and thus become liable to do him injustice. On one of Mr. Rutherford’s passages he frankly says:

“When I had read over Mr. R. once and again, I was at a stand in my own thoughts, to determine certainly what he properly intended. I profess in a word of truth, I would not willingly misconceive his meaning, and so wrong him *and* the truth.”

Mr. Hooker is sometimes most amusingly playful and adroit, when his opponent has incautiously weakened his own position by something he has written, in making him answer himself. His skill in overturning the positions and arguments of an opponent is masterly and irresistible. He was too well trained as a logician, and too well accustomed to the discriminating and critical examination of the questionable doctrines advanced, however ingeniously or plausibly stated, to render it safe for an incautious or unskillful reasoner to fall into his hands.

In the review of the discussions of Mr. Hooker, as they were designed to controvert the sentiments of Professor Rutherford, it is natural to make the reflection that the differences between good men here on earth, which do not involve the fundamental articles of the Christian faith and practice, need be no bar to their Christian fellowship on earth; nor can they embarrass their final union as members of the church triumphant in heaven. Rutherford, as he appears in his experiential and practical writings, was a man of deep, serious, ardent, heavenly-spirited piety; one with whom Hooker, as a devout Christian, could not fail to feel a strong and lively sympathy. He is believed to be the same person of whom the Rev. Richard Cecil, in his *Remains*, says: “Rutherford’s Letters is one of my classics. Were truth the beam [of the scales,] I have no doubt that if Homer, Virgil, and Horace, and all that the world has agreed to idolize, were weighed against that book, they would be lighter than vanity. He is a real original. There are in his letters some inexpressibly forcible and arresting remonstrances with unconverted men.”<sup>2</sup>

And Rutherford, when he came to reply to Hooker in his “Survey of the Survey,” thus expresses his regard for his character:

“As I intend to darken the reputation of no man; so far less to undervalue the authority and name of the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, *Mr. Thomas Hooker*. Indeed, the commandment of God lays laws upon me, to give testimony to his learning, his dexterous eloquence and accuracy in disputes; and as Christian report bears, to judge him as one who walked with God and preached Christ, ‘not with the enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.’”

Mr. Hooker’s *Survey*, as already remarked, appears to have been a more extended work than some of the others on the same subject, in his time. And it was highly valued among the New England churches, as a digest of the elementary principles of Congregationalism. It has been stated, in a sketch of his life given in a periodical work several years ago, that “from his opinions was digested the Platform of 1648.”<sup>3</sup> It may have been used for such a purpose, as were the works of Cotton, Shepard, and others.

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<sup>1</sup> *Rush candle*: a type of inexpensive candle formed by soaking the dried pith of the rush plant in fat or grease, which emits light for a relatively short period of time.

<sup>2</sup> Cecil’s works, vol. III, p. 347.

<sup>3</sup> Conn. Evang. Magazine, I, 445. See also Cong. Ch. Order, edit. 1845, p. 24.

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The principles of Congregational Church Polity, however, as in practice in New England, and so widely extending their influence over our western country at the present day, were not brought forward by anyone man. Nor were they matured as the act of the good men of any single period in our New England history. To have perfected such a system is an honor which belongs to no one man, nor to the fathers of one generation. The minds, hearts, and hands of many good and great men, guided by “the Spirit of the Lord,” and who have written at different periods, and added to the stock of instruction, have been concerned in this thing. The present matured condition of Congregational Church Polity in New England is the fruit of the experience, prayerful study, and careful discussions of the good men of two hundred years; and of the previous period of the progress of Puritan principles in the fatherland. It was not to be expected that any single writer, of all the New England Fathers, whatever his talents may have been, would embody all which could be needful in one digest, for the government of the churches. No one man’s book would be unanimously adopted, as containing all that was necessary, and nothing to which exceptions would be made. Nothing more therefore is claimed, nor can properly be claimed, for Hooker, or Cotton, or Davenport, or Shepard, or any other man, than that “he has done what he could” to assist in settling the great first principles of Congregationalism. He humbly and confidently left the work to be carried forward by following generations of wise and good men, as experience and further study of the subject should make progress. All that is claimed for the subject of this memoir, therefore, is simply that which has been said by a distinguished writer on Congregational Polity, of our own time and country:

“The venerable wisdom of John Cotton, and the logical acuteness of Mr. Hooker, of Hartford, stood side by side and shoulder to shoulder, with the learning of Robinson and Owen, not to mention many other renowned names; and had a share in forming the goodly proportions of our Ecclesiastical Structure.” <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Upham’s *Ratio Disciplinae*, p. 82.



## Chapter 9. His Posterity.

The posterity of good men a subject for inquiry. Hereditary merit disclaimed. The Scripture method of treatment at the subject of posterity. The descendants of Mr. Hooker viewed in their different professions and stations In the church and in the country, and their relations to general society. Concluding reflections.

IN a country like New England, peopled to a considerable extent at first by Puritans, the lapse of more than two centuries has rendered it natural to inquire respecting their descendants. This is especially an inquiry of some interest, relative to the posterity of men who bore a prominent part in the formation of its fundamental institutions, civil, political, and religious. Their residence, number, character, positions in the church, in the state, and in relation to the literature, professions, morals, and benevolent enterprises of the country; and also to its interests agricultural, commercial, financial, manufacturing, etc. — all these are points for inquiry. And last, though not least, we naturally want to learn how, in the more retired, domestic, and social relationships of life, they have been concerned in giving character to general society.

For, after all that may be said relative to the public or professional worth and eminence of individuals, the fundamental elements of good and happiness in the civil state, are found in its domestic and social circles, in the homes of its families, and in the character of those who fill those homes. If there is no moral and intellectual worth there, it exists nowhere. If it does exist there, it is sure to find its way into the fabric of the state.

Thomas Hooker came to New England, so that he with his associates then, and their posterity after them, might first of all worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences; and next, that they might enjoy that civil liberty which is the proper associate of religious freedom. He did not seek these ends in vain, as we have seen in former chapters. He assisted in laying the foundations upon which the New England States especially, and their churches, have been built up; and by which, in confederacy with the other states in our Union, they have labored to found and confirm this republic. Every faithful historian of our country recognizes and most fully declares what Winthrop, Haynes, Cotton, Hooker, Eaton, Davenport, and their associates accomplished in furtherance of the religious order, civil stability, social happiness, and prosperity which have been so richly enjoyed.

However, while this subject of inquiry is considered, and while its results may show in the case of any given worthy or father of New England, that his descendants have, in good measure, sustained his reputation, an utter disclaimer is entered here against the doctrine of hereditary merit, in all its branches. Men are worthy of respect, not because the blood of good and worthy ancestors runs in their veins — whether those ancestors were in the high walks of society in a republican country, or in the ranks of royalty or nobility, in a kingdom or empire. They are worthy of respect, simply and alone, on the ground of their own personal worth. Men are great, in their learning and the arts, or by their influence in the concerns of a commonwealth or nation — not through ancestry, but as they have devoted themselves to study and the acquirement of knowledge; and as they have employed their talents, attainments, sagacity and experience in promoting the true and best interests of the country of their birth or adoption, and of the world at large. Men are virtuous, not as descendants of the virtuous, but as being themselves the steady and diligent practicers of virtue, and its firm exemplifiers and advocates amidst the tests of virtue to which they are daily called in such a world as this. And men are Christians, not by virtue of a godly parentage and ancestry, but “by the grace of God,” and through the active exercise of that grace, in lives of obedience to the divine requirements as revealed in the sacred Scriptures.

Furthermore, in our contemplations of the object, we are to be religiously mindful of the instructions upon it, which the God and Father of all men has given us in his word. Without giving the least countenance to pride of ancestry, in any of the human family, the Scriptures give instructions and promises which encourage verity, and confirm the hope of future good and

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happiness to themselves and theirs, in all those who will rightly receive them, and endeavor to profit by them. Early in the history of the world, God began to speak to man of *his posterity*, as to be the subjects of reward or retribution according to character and conduct in parent and posterity. At the giving of the Law upon Sinai, one of the solemn announcements of the divine character and government was this: “For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of those who hate me; and showing mercy to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

Every generation of men has experienced the divine fidelity to this declaration, in fulfilling alike the threatening and the promise thus given. For the encouragement of his people, God has said, “I will establish my covenant between me and you and your seed after you, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to you and your seed after you.” The divine condescension has thus been attended with distinct intimations to men, that their choice of good and right ways would take hold on their own good, and that of their posterity. “Choose life, that you and your seed may live.” And as an all-important requisite to holiness, and from there blessedness for this life and for eternity, God has proffered his own grace to renew and sanctify:

“I will pour my Spirit upon my Seed, and my blessing upon your offspring; and they shall spring up as the grass, and as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord’s; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand and surname himself by the name of Israel.” (Isa 44.3-5)

The fulfillment of this promise in the gracious renewal and living holiness of multitudes of the descendants of good men who have lived in all generations, attests the divine faithfulness to this rich and extensive promise.

Join with this promise of divine grace, others which respect temporal good also, and the divine regard to the posterity of the righteous is still further testified. “Instead of the fathers, shall be your children, whom you may make princes in all the earth,” Psa 45.16. “The days of your children shall be multiplied,” Deu 11.21. “The Lord shall increase you more and more, you and your children,” Psa 115.14. The seed of the righteous shall be delivered, Pro 11.21. Numerous other promises of temporal good and happiness might be quoted, as embraced in the designs of God toward the posterity of the just.

There is indeed no earthly good, desirable by the children of men, which is not promised to the descendants of the righteous, if found in the paths of the righteous, *following their steps* in which they have been followers of the commandments of God. And to this scriptural and religious view of ancestry and posterity, we attach a higher importance and interest than to any view relating simply to the present life — whether involving honor, wealth, intellectual greatness, length of life, or any of the enjoyments which can be found on this side of eternity, and in the pursuit of sublunary things.<sup>1</sup>

This digression from the historical and biographical track of the present volume, it is trusted will be excused by the reader, as containing the reasons for introducing this chapter. It is proposed to give a brief account of the descendants of Mr. Thomas Hooker, so far as their history and condition in life and society is learned.

Let it be distinctly noted here, that this will not be done as showing, or wishing to show, that there has been anything peculiar in the case of this man’s descendants, beyond those of any other good and great man of his time; nor as placing the posterity of Hooker on higher ground than the descendants of other men of like excellence. An inquiry into the history of the families of Cotton, Winthrop, Eliot, Shepard, Davenport, and other men of that day, would ascertain similar facts illustrative of the subject of worthy ancestry, being followed by a posterity desirous of honoring

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<sup>1</sup> *Sublunary*: things beneath the moon; earthly things.

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their descent. And more especially let it be said here, explicitly, that this will not be done to countenance in the least degree, that family pride which is as contemptible as it is incongruous with the simplicity of republican society. That American who lays claim to a species of informal nobility of birth and blood, by virtue of his descent from a civil or Christian worthy, of other times; and who affects to look down upon others less favored than himself, with sentiments of disesteem or disrespect, has forgotten (if he ever knew) the first principles of republicanism. It may serve to humble this spirit, that from the best and greatest men have sometimes descended some of the worst and basest. On the other hand, from men of very humble pretensions and deep obscurity, have sprung some of the best and greatest men with whom a wise and merciful God has blessed this world. And with our eyes upon these two facts, this Scripture is emphatic: "The Lord of hosts has purposed it to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth." (Isa 23.9) "He has exalted those of low degree." (Luk 1.52) "He raises the poor out of the dust, and lifts the needy out of the dunghill; that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people." (1Sam 2.8)

Mr. Thomas Hooker had six children, who lived to ages suitable to enter the marriage relation. The eldest and the youngest were sons. The first, Mr. John Hooker, married in England and resided there, and was a minister in the established church. If he had children, it does not appear that they or theirs ever resided in America. The other son and the daughters, therefore, were the branches of his family from which have sprung the descendants of Mr. Hooker in this country. His first daughter, Joanna. was married to the Rev. Thomas Shepard, the well known and excellent successor of Mr. Hooker at Newtown, now Cambridge, Mass. The second daughter, Mary, was married to Rev. Roger Newton, supposed to have been a student with Mr. Hooker, in preparation for the ministry, first of Farmington, afterwards of Milford, Conn. The third daughter, Sarah, was married to Rev. John Wilson, of Medfield, Mass, a son of the first pastor of the first church in Boston, of the same name. The fourth daughter became a widow, but it is not known whether she had any children.

Mr. Hooker's second son and sixth child was Samuel. He received his education at Harvard University, entered the ministry, and at length became the pastor of the church in Farmington, Conn. He was a man to whose great worth and excellence Cotton Mather, in his *Magnalia*, has borne honorable testimony. Farmington appears to have been the residence of more of the descendants of Mr. Thomas Hooker, down to the present time, than any other town in New England.

A catalogue of the descendants of Mr. Hooker, in course of preparation, affords some materials for statements which may interest the reader who has a taste for the study of ancestry. It may be more interesting still, to any who would inquire after their religious character, and their relations to the interests of our country — moral, civil, literary and benevolent.

A little more than 200 years have elapsed since Mr. Thomas Hooker came to New England. The number of generations of his descendants is nine. Of these, a few of the sixth, together with the seventh, eighth, and some young children in the ninth, are now living. They have resided principally in the States of Connecticut and Massachusetts; although some have resided in New York and Vermont; and still others are scattered in parts of the country farther from the home of their ancestor. Many of them have shared in the spirit of emigration and enterprise, which has led the sons and daughters of New England into distant sections of the country.

They have been distributed in the various professions, offices, and employments, in which men render themselves useful to their country — in which reputation, respectability and good maintenance are acquired. The greater part of them have always been Congregationalists; and they have held essentially the same faith as their godly ancestor, relative to all the evangelical doctrines of the Bible. The relationships which they have formed by marriage have connected

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them with numerous worthy families, and in some instances, with lines of descent from others of the early ancestors of New England.

It is worthy of special notice, that a large number of Mr. Hooker's male descendants, forty-two, have been ministers of the gospel; and also that an almost equal number of his female descendants, forty, have been connected with ministers, by marriage — making a catalogue of eighty-two. These facts are both instructive and interesting, when it is considered that Mr. Hooker himself was devoted to "preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ," as his great and most loved employment. And it also appears that the number of ministers in the Hooker family, by descent and by marriage, far outnumbers those who are known to have been eminent in any other professions or public employments. The smiles of divine grace have been visibly upon his descendants, in connecting them so intimately with the great interests of the kingdom of Christ; and with the work so dear to his own heart, to which his best talents were consecrated.

Some of these ministers were transferred from tutorships to presidencies, or departments of instruction in colleges, or in professional seminaries; some to offices in connection with our institutions of Christian benevolence, or to other similar stations of usefulness. <sup>1</sup>

While such numbers have been connected with the Christian ministry, the interests of education, and of the other liberal professions, and of general literature and intelligence, have been served by other descendants of Mr. Hooker, or those who became related to the line of his descendants by marriage.<sup>2</sup>

It cannot be doubted that he also desired that those who came after him, as his children and "children's children," should serve the commonwealth, the country of their birth and their privileges, as well as the church and the interests of religion. It is a subject for devout gratitude, to Him who appoints to his friends their various fields of service, that it pleased Him to connect so many of Mr. Hooker's descendants, officially, with the public interests of the States of Connecticut and Massachusetts particularly, as well as with those of the country at large. And also that He assigned some of them to the different departments of government, jurisprudence, legislation, and military service in the time of our great revolutionary struggle. <sup>3</sup> "A man's heart devises his way, but the Lord directs his steps." There are great civil and political interests to be served in a country like our own; and this, too, by men of high moral character; and better still, of religious character. Without such services, by such men, the interests of religion itself will be liable to embarrassment and hinderance, if not to entire prostration. Therefore, when God, in his wise providence, directs the ways of some of the descendants of his best friends into other professions than the Christian ministry, and assigns them the duties and responsibilities of public civil stations, it is doubtless done with reference to that great ultimate object, the advancement of his kingdom in the earth, as "a kingdom of righteousness and peace."

This may especially be regarded as his design, where the descendants of a good man, in considerable number, carry with them the Christian character and spirit into their places of trust and office; and discharge their duties there in the fear of God, and from a desire to promote his honor among men. It cannot be doubted that it is of the utmost importance, that into all the departments of human influence and action, in a country like our own, there should be carried the salutary influence of Christian principle, because it ensures the virtues of integrity, justice, and faithfulness to truth and right. That ancestor is truly honored, whose descendants, wherever they are found, are known as the uncompromising friends and practicers of "whatever things are honest, true, just, pure, lovely, and of good report." If there is such a thing as national virtue, or in the better language of Scripture, "righteousness exalting a nation," its existence is to be

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<sup>1</sup> For a catalogue of the ministers to whom allusion is made, see Appendix, C.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix D.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix, E.

## Chapter 9. His Posterity.

attributed — next to the grace of God — to the instrumentality of men who have carried into the various departments of action and of usefulness, the influence of men in whom dwells “the Spirit of Christ.”

To the notices already recorded of descendants, or of persons related by marriage to descendants of Mr. Hooker, should also be added a considerable number who, for shorter or longer periods, especially in the earlier years of Connecticut and Massachusetts, have been prominent in legislative affairs. In former times when, without regard to rotation in office, men of experience and sound judgment were elected repeatedly, and perhaps for a series of years, to the different branches of state legislature, men among the descendants of Mr. Hooker are found to have served as assistants, or state senators, or as representatives, or in the offices of one or another of these branches of legislature, for successive sessions of from two or three, to more than forty. Thus they became trained to a skill and experience in public business, which probably contributed much to that wisdom and permanence in the laws, of which notice has been taken in a former chapter.

The genealogical researches respecting the descendants of Mr. Hooker, already alluded to, so far as they were pursued, have also shown that more than thirty of them have been members of the professions of Medicine and of Law;<sup>1</sup> a large number have been merchants; several have been bank officers, treasurers to funded institutions, or financiers; besides numerous others who have held offices in Congregational or Presbyterian churches, offices of civil magistracy, probate offices, clerkships of courts, sheriffships, etc. In a country, and under a form of government like our own, where the facilities for rising by usefulness and the force of diligent and faithful discharge of duty, are unembarrassed by hereditary and titled claims. It is the privilege of every man to have employment which will be honorable; if not in public office, yet in that estimation in which — even in the retirement of private life — an unofficial influence and usefulness gives him a place in the respect, confidence, and affections of society.

This volume will be brought to a close, with a reflection on the important consequences which may result from a single life, of one good man. A great “poet of nature” has said,

“The evil which men do lives after them,  
The good is oft interred with their bones.”<sup>2</sup>

Thanks to the good providence of God ruling over men, there are numerous and happy exceptions to the sweeping reflection in the second line of this quotation. They are found in the cases of the New England Fathers; and in no one of them more clearly than in that of the good man whose history has been the subject of this inquiry. No historian of our country, who has had any respect for the opinions of good men or for his own reputation, has failed to aid in perpetuating their influence by the record of their virtues, and by the history of their acts, in which they have made themselves examples to their posterity. The writings of these Fathers have in former generations helped further the same important purpose. By both their history and their works, “though dead,” they “yet speak.”

A very small amount of conscience in an unprincipled writer, may be sufficient to embarrass his efforts to perpetuate the influence of a wicked man. It may cause him to speak with some reserve, where it is in his power to do great moral injury by his pen. But in writing of such men as the Chief Fathers of New England, self-respect, conscience, common sense, and sound judgment — even where writers do not make a religious profession — all have conspired to urge them to a faithful record of the virtues by which such men have made themselves blessings to their own time, and to uncounted ages following. Thus it comes to pass that a good man is made to live again, for the best interest of his country and of the Church of God, when his mortal life has been long closed.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix F.

<sup>2</sup> A quotation from Act 3, scene ii of *Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare.

## Chapter 9. His Posterity.

God has appointed that it should be so. And not all the power of unsanctified intellect, nor of 'the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience,' can thwart this purpose of the Divine Mind.

The influence of the subject of this memoir is felt in these States to this hour; it will be felt while the religion and the liberty for which the Puritan Fathers struggled, continues to live in this nation. To have lived on earth as did Cotton, Winthrop, Eliot, Shepard, Hopkins, Eaton, Haynes, Davenport, and many others of the ministers and civilians of the time of Hooker — men who "feared God," "eschewed evil," lived in "the faith of Jesus," and died in "the hope of the gospel," and accomplished for themselves and others the best purposes of this life as preparatory for "the life which is to come;" — to have lived thus, is to have lived worthily. To have stamped their own characters upon a youthful nation, so that ages after ages have not effaced, and *cannot* efface the impressions; and then to have gone up to the rewards of the righteous, to the blissful "inheritance of the saints in light" — this is indeed to have had an existence which is surpassed in excellence and honor by that of but one other order of created intelligencies — "the angels of God in heaven."

## APPENDIX.

### *(A) Names of the first Proprietors of Cambridge.*

Jeremy Adams—Matthew Allen—John Benjamin—Jonathan Boswell—Simon Bradstreet (afterwards Governor of Massachusetts)—John Bridge—Richard Butler—John Clarke—Antony Couldby (or Colby)—Daniel Dennison—Thomas Dudley, Esq.—Samuel Dudley—Edward Elmer—Richard Goodman—William Goodwin—Garrard Hadden—Stephen Hart—John Haynes, Esq. (afterwards Governor of Connecticut)—Thomas Heate—Rev. Thomas Hooker—Thomas Hosmer—Richard Harlackenden—William Lewis—Richard Lord—John Masters—Abraham Morrill—Restor Mussey—Simon Oakes—James Olmsted—Capt. Daniel Patrick—John Prat—William Pentrey—Joseph Redinge—Nathaniel Richards—William Spencer—Thomas Spencer—Edward Stebbins—John Steele—George Steele—Rev. Samuel Stone—John Talcott—William Wadsworth—Andrew Warner—Richard Webb—William Westwood—John White.

### *(B) Invitation to the Westminster Assembly of Divines*

A copy of the document accompanying the invitation to Messrs. Hooker, Cotton and Davenport, to the Westminster Assembly of Divines.

“The expression of the desires of those honorable and worthy personages, of both houses of Parliament, who call and wish the presence of Mr. Cotton, Mr. Hooker, and Mr. Davenport, to come over with all possible speed, all or any of them, if all cannot. The condition in which the state of things in this kingdom now stands we suppose you have from the relations of others; by which you cannot help but understand how great a need there is of helps of prayer and improvement of all good manners from all parts, for the settling and composing the affairs of the Church. We therefore present to you our earnest desires for you all. To show in which or how many ways you may be useful, would easily be done by us and found by you, if you were present with us. In all likelihood you will find opportunity enough to draw out all that healthfulness that God shall afford by you. And we do not doubt these advantages will be such as will fully answer all inconveniences that your selves, churches, or plantations may sustain, in this your voyage and short absence from them. Only the sooner you come the better.

[Signed] Warwick,

W. Say and Seale,  
Ph. Wharton,  
Nath. Fiennes,  
Gilbert Gerrard,  
Tho. Barrington,  
Richard Browne,  
Henry Martin,  
Oliver Cromwell,  
A. Haselrig,  
Tho. Hoyle,  
Anth. Stapley,  
William Hay,  
Wm. Masham,  
Gilbert Pickering,  
Mart. Lumley,  
Ol. St. John,  
Sam. Luke,  
Ar. Goodwin,  
Miles Corbett,

Mandeville,  
Robert Brooke,  
Wm. Strickland,  
Henry Darley,  
Valentine Walton,  
William Cowleys,  
John Gurdon,  
John Blackiston,  
Godfrey Rosseville,  
Cor. Holland,  
Humphrey Salway,  
J. Wastill,  
H. Ruthin,  
Alex. Bruce,  
Ro. Cooke,  
Nath. Barnardiston  
Isaac Pennington,  
John Franklyn,  
William Spurstowe.

## APPENDIX.

### ***(C) Catalogue of Ministers descended from Mr. Hooker.***

Rev. John Hooker, Rector of Maseworth, Eng.  
Samuel Hooker, Farmington, Conn., 1664.  
Samuel. Shepard, Rowley, Mass.  
Daniel Hooker; resided in Wethersfield, Conn.  
Samuel Pierpont, Lyme, Conn., 1724.  
Nathaniel Hooker, West Hanford, Conn.  
John Hooker, Northampton, Mass., 1753.  
Cyprian Strong, Chatham, Conn., 1765.  
Jonathan Edwards, D. D., New Haven, Conn., 1769; Colebrook, Conn., 1795; President of Union College, Schenectady, New York, 1799.  
Timothy Dwight, D. D., LL. D., Greenfield, Conn; President of Yale College, Conn., 1795.  
“Seth Hart, Rector Waterbury and Wallingford, Conn.; Hempstead, Long Island, NY.  
William Hart, Rector, Richmond, Va., and Walden, N. Y.  
Rev. Giles H. Cowles, D. D., Bristol, Conn., and Austinburgh, Ohio.  
Asahel Hooker, Goshen, Conn., 1795; Norwich, Conn., 1812.  
Asahel Strong, Clinton, N. Y., 1795.  
Solomon Williams, Enosburg, and Addison, Vt; Potsdam, N. Y.  
Serenio E. Dwight, D. D., Park Street, Boston, 1818; President Hamilton College, N. Y.  
John Pierpont, Hollis Street, Boston, Mass.; Troy, N. Y.  
Timothy Woodbridge, D. D., Greenriver, and Spencertown, N. Y.  
William T. Dwight, D. D., Portland, Me.  
Edward W. Hooker, Greens Farms, Conn., 1821; Bennington, Vt, 1832; Prof. Sac. Rhet. Theol. Inst., Conn., 1844.  
Horace Hooker, Watertown, Conn., 1822; Editor Conn. Observer, 1824; Sec. Conn. Missionary Society.  
Thomas H. Gallaudet, Prin. Conn. Asylum for Deaf and Dumb; Chaplain Conn. Retreat for Insane.  
Jonathan E. Woodbridge, Ware, Mass.; Editor New England Puritan.  
Theodore D. Woolsey, D. D., Prof. Greek Lit. Yale Coll. 1831; Pres. Yale Coll. 1846.  
Rev. John A. Yates, D. D., Prof. Orient. Lit. in Union Coll., Schenectady, N. Y.  
Henry B. Hooker, Lanesboro’, Mass., 1826; Falmouth, Mass, 1837.  
Robert Ogden Dwight, Missionary A. B. C. F. M, Madura, India.  
Mr. Samuel H. Cowles, Licentiate, Andover Seminary, deceased 1824.  
Rev. Jeremiah Porter, Western Missionary.  
Richard Hooker, Macon, Ga.  
Tryon Edwards, D. D., Rochester, N. Y; New London, Conn.  
John E. Edwards, Stonington, Conn.  
Caleb Strong, Montreal, L. Canada.  
Edward S. Dwight, Saco, Me.  
Herman Hooker, Philadelphia, Penn.

### ***Ministers who married female descendants of Rev. Thomas Hooker.***

Rev. Thomas Shepard, Cambridge, Mass.  
Roger Newton, Milford, Conn.  
John Wilson, Medfield, Mass.  
Grindall Rawson, Mendon, Mass.  
Thomas Weld, Dunstable, Mass.  
Rev. James Pierpont, New Haven, Conn.  
Stephen Buckingham, Norwalk, Conn.  
William Russell, Middletown, Conn.  
Isaac Stiles, North Haven, Conn.  
Aaron Burr, Newark, N. J; Pres. Nassau Hall College, Princeton, N. J.  
Jonathan Edwards, Northampton, Mass; Stockbridge, Mass; Pres. Nassau Hall College, Princeton, N. J.  
“Benjamin Lord, D. D., Norwich, Conn.  
Solomon Williams, Northampton, Mass.  
Amos Fowler, Guilford, Conn.  
Allen Olcott, Farmington, Conn.



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Amos Bassett, Hebron, Conn.  
James Richards, D. D., Morristown, N.J.; Newark, N.J; Prof. Chn. Theol, Auburn, N. Y.  
Calvin Chapin, D. D., Rocky-hill, Conn.  
John Eastman, Norwich, and Hanover, N. Y.  
Jonathan Leavitt, Walpole, N. H.  
Claudius Herrick, Woodbridge, Conn; Teacher, New Haven, Conn.  
Andrew Yates, D. D., East Hartford, Conn; Prof. Logic and Moral Phil, Un. Coll., Schenectady, N. Y.  
Alexander Phoenix, Chickopee, Mass.  
Rev. Joshua L. Williams, Middletown, Conn.  
Elias Cornelius, D. D., Salem, Mass.; Sec. Amer. Ed. Soc.; Sec. Amer. Board Com. For. Missions.  
Joseph D. Wickham, New Rochelle, N. Y; Principal of Burr Seminary, Manchester, Vt.  
Amzi Francis, L. Island, N. Y.  
Joshua Leavitt, Stratford, Conn.; Ed. Seaman's Magazine; Sec. Seaman's Fr. Soc; Ed. N. York Evangelist;  
Ed. Emancipator. New York and Boston.  
Solomon Peck, Prof. Lang, Amherst Coll., Mass.; Prof. Latin Lang, Brown Univ., Providence, R. I; For. Sec.  
Amer. Baptist Missionary Union.  
Edwards A. Park, D. D., Braintree, Mass; Prof. Moral Phil. and Metaph., Amherst Coll., Mass; Bartlett Prof.  
Sac. Rhet., Andover Theol. Sem.; Abbott Prof. Chn. Theol, Andover Theol. Sem.  
Samuel Hopkins, Montpelier, Vt; Saco, Me.  
Josiah F. Goodhue, Shoreham, Vt.  
John N. Lewis, Bristol, N. Y.  
John B. Shaw, Fairhaven, Vt.  
William S. Tyler, Prof. Gr. and Heb. Languages, Amherst Coll., Mass.  
Rev. R. H. Seeley, Bristol, Conn; Springfield, Mass.  
Augustus C. Thompson, Roxbury, Mass.  
E. Janes Montague, Summit, Wisconsin.  
Leonard Bacon, D. D., New Haven, Conn.  
Henry L. Van Meter, Missionary of Amer. Bap. Miss. Union; Arracan.

### ***(D) Descendants who have served in Education***

Descendants who have served the interests of education, as Professors in institutions for education in the liberal professions, in general literature, intelligence, and the fine arts.

Hon. John H. Ashmun, Royall Prof. Law, Harvard Univ, Cambridge, Mass.  
Charles Hooker, M. D., Prof. Anat. and Phys, Yale Coll., New Haven, Conn.  
Mr. Seth Norton, Prof. Lang, Hamilton Coll., N. York.  
Edward Hooker, Esq., Teacher, Farmington, Conn.  
Mr. Henry E. Dwight, Asso. Prin. New Haven Gymnasium.  
Hon. Theodore Dwight, Editor, Hartford, Conn. and New York.  
Hon. Daniel Wadsworth, Hartford, Conn.  
James G. Percival, M. D., Author And Poet.  
Theodore Dwight, Jr., Esq., Editor, Brooklyn, N. Y.

### ***(E) Descendants in important public offices, civil, military, and others.***

Samuel Hooker, first Mayor of New York City.  
John Hooker, Judge of Sup. Court. Conn.  
General Selah Hart, of American Army in War of the Revolution.  
Major Roger Hooker, Sec. to Gen. Hart; and services of special responsibility in war of the Revolution.  
Colonel Noadiah Hooker, of Army of the Revolution.  
Hon. Timothy Edwards, Stockbridge, Mass, Army Commissioner, in the war of the Revolution.  
Aaron Burr, Vice President U. S. America.  
Hon. Pierpont Edwards, District Judge of U. S. Court for Connecticut.  
John Hooker, Springfield, Mass., Judge of Court of Common Pleas.  
Jonathan W. Edwards, Hartford, Conn.  
Henry W. Edwards, Governor of Connecticut.  
Ogden Edwards, Judge of Court in State of New York.  
Lewis Strong, Northampton, Mass, State Senator.

## APPENDIX.

Thomas Devereux, State's Attorney, North Carolina.

Henry B. Cowles, M. C, New York.

Asahel H. Lewis, State Senator, Ohio.

George Ashmun, State Senator and officer in the Legislature of Massachusetts; also M.C. from Massachusetts.

John Worthington Hooker, Esq., U. S. Indian Agent at Tellicothe, Tennessee.

### ***Others in spheres of literary influence and benevolent efforts.***

It is deemed proper to add to the foregoing catalogue, the names of several other men in like stations of public importance and usefulness, some of them in spheres of literary influence and of benevolent effort, who formed relations by marriage with female descendants of Mr. Hooker.

Hon. Daniel Edwards, Judge Sup. Court, Connecticut.

Col. Jeremiah Wadsworth, of the Army of Revolution.

Hon. Tapping Reeve, Judge Sup. Court, Connecticut.

Caleb Strong, Governor of Massachusetts.

Nathaniel Terry, M. C., Connecticut.

William Woolsey, first Treas. Amer. Bible Society, New York.

Hon. Eli P. Ashmun, Senator in Congress, Massachusetts.

Samuel W. Johnson, Judge Sup. Court, Connecticut.

Eli Whitney, Esq., New Haven, Conn; — well known as a national benefactor, by useful inventions.

Hon. William Bristol, Judge U. S. Dist. Court for Connecticut.

Professor Ethan Allen Andrews, Author of valuable textbooks in Learned Languages.

Frederick A. Packard, Esq., Editor of Publications of Amer. S. S. Union.

### ***Descendants prominent in early legislation of Connecticut and Massachusetts.***

Also, to the foregoing catalogues should be added the names of some of Mr. Hooker's descendants who were prominent in the early legislation of the States of Connecticut and Massachusetts.

John Shepard, Esq., Lynn, Mass.

Samuel Newton, Esq., Conn., for 15 legislative sessions.

Thomas Hooker, Esq., Conn., 5 sessions.

Hon. Roger Newton, in Legislature 38 years,

Speaker of House Rep. 10 sessions, Conn.

Nathaniel Hooker, Esq., for 6 sessions, Conn.

Joseph Hooker, Esq., Representative and Legislative officer. Conn.

Nathaniel Hooker, Esq., Conn., 6 sessions.

Nathaniel Hooker, Jr, Esq.

Joseph Pierpont, Esq., Conn.

Samuel Hart, Esq., Conn.

Daniel Pierpont, Esq., Conn.

James Hooker, Esq. Conn., for 19 sessions.

John Hooker, Esq., of Farmington, Conn., Rep. 23 years; in Upper House 21 sessions; Clerk 2 years, and Speaker 6 years.

John Hooker. Esq., of Berlin, Conn., 7 sessions.

Romanta Norton, Sheriff of Hartford County, Conn.

### ***(F) Descendants who entered the profession of Law***

Of the descendants of Mr. Hooker, the following, in addition to those already mentioned as in public life, entered the profession of Law.

Alfred Cowles, Esq., Illinois.

Theodore Strong, Esq., Northampton, Mass.

John Hooker, Esq., Springfield, Mass.

Josiah Hooker, Esq., Springfield, Mass.

Edward Hooker, Esq., Ohio City, Oh.

John Hooker, Esq., Columbia, S. C.

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John Hooker, Esq., Farmington, Conn.  
Charles Olcott, Esq., Medina, O.  
Aaron B. Reeve, Esq., Troy, N. Y.  
Jonathan E. Porter, Esq., New Haven, Conn.  
Jonathan Edwards, Esq., Troy, N. Y.  
Walter Edwards, Esq., New York City.  
John Starkes Edwards, Esq., New York.  
James Hooker, Esq., Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

### ***Descendants who have been Physicians***

The following, in addition to those mentioned in Professorships of Medicine, have been Physicians.

Thomas Hooker, M. D., Hartford, Conn.  
John R. Lee, M. D., Worcester, Mass.  
Thomas G. Lee, M. D., Charlestown, Mass.  
Theodore H. Wadsworth, M. D., Austinburgh, Oh.  
John B. Taylor, M. D., Cambridge.  
George Hooker, M. D., Longmeadow, Mass.  
Worthington Hooker, M. D., Norwich, Conn.  
William Hooker, M. D., Westhampton, Mass.  
Anson Hooker, M. D., East Cambridge, Mass.  
William Hooker, M. D., Dover, N. Y.  
Sylvester Wells, M. D., Kensington, Conn.  
William Hooker, M. D., Westchester, N. Y.  
William Porter, M. D., Hadley, Mass.  
Nathaniel Hooker, M. D., Hartford, Conn.  
Edward P. Terry, M. D., Hartford, Conn.  
Adrian R. Terry, M. D., Detroit, Mich.  
Charles A. Terry, M. D., Cleveland, Oh.

### ***Additional names of professional men***

The following have been received since the foregoing catalogues were in type.

#### ***Ministers, descendants of Rev. Thomas Hooker.***

Rev. William Russell, Windsor, Conn.  
Noadiah Russell, Thompson, Conn.  
Joseph Welch, resided Troy, N. Y.  
Maurice W. Dwight, Brooklyn, N. Y.  
Nathaniel Dwight, Westchester, Conn.  
Theodore M. Dwight, ---, Georgia.

#### ***Connected by marriage.***

Rev. Moses C. Welch, ---, Conn.  
Hon. Matthew T. Russell, Middletown, Conn.  
Cyrus P. Smith, Mayor of Brooklyn, N.Y. (by marriage)  
William H. Russell, Esq., Instructor, New Haven, Conn.

**General Note** – The author has endeavored to make the preceding catalogues as full and accurate as possible. It will probably be found imperfect, still. Any additions and corrections, requisite to its completeness, and which may be furnished previous to the issue of another edition of this volume, will be carefully made. Information relative to any of the descendants of Rev. Thomas Hooker or their families, is respectfully solicited by the author.

**THE END**