- Chapter 5 -
Practices and mimetic virtue

Introduction

We saw in the preceding chapter that Hooker describes our participation in Christ largely in terms of the covenant of grace, relying relatively more on the semantic field of relation (copulation, conjunction, interaction) to describe our personal relationships with Christ. Our participation is authentic fellowship in the sense of the participation of two persons in each other who become as one while remaining wholly other to one another, a union in which they share a history of interactions through which their dispositions are revealed and reciprocally shaped. We saw also that we can describe our encounters with the Christ in the grammar appropriate to personal relationships, the grammar Sellars described as the logical space of reasons. Furthermore, I've suggested that, through successive personal encounters, we come to know Christ's dispositions, and come to recognize him as Reconciler whom we trust as the Lord of Life.

This description of ongoing interactive interpersonal communion sets up the argument of the current chapter. I will argue that such interpersonal communion precedes and provides the necessary context for our recognition and imitation of Christ as the Supreme Exemplar. Ecclesial practices thereby provide the successive iterations through which virtue is formed mimetically over a lifetime.[461] The mind of Christ is formed in community by the Spirit's actuation of personal relationships through which Christ reveals his dispositions and tutors us, so that, through mimesis, we are "transformed by the renewing of [our] minds" (Rom. 12:2).

Here the key move is to understand how the personal relationship forged by Christ through ecclesial practices provides the necessary context for our justifiable

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461. Tom Wright describes Paul's worldview in terms of story, practice, and symbol. I find Wright's treatment especially interesting because, as mentioned in my introductory chapter, my thesis began with the observation of the priority of mimesis in Paul's account of how the mind of Christ is formed in Christian community. I take Wright's heuristic deployment of story, practice, and symbol as roughly comparable to my usage of 'practices' here. Practices, in this study, include story and symbol. See the first two chapters of N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, Kindle ed., Christian Origins and the Question of God, vol. 4 (Fortress Press, 2013-11-01).

trust in Christ as the supreme exemplar. I proceed in four movements. The first introduces the work of two ecclesial ethicists whose work it is the hope of this study to extend, Stanley Hauerwas and Samuel Wells. The second extends concepts introduced in the preceding chapter, regarding our experience of being addressed by and responding to Christ, by developing a thicker concept of the particularity of human agents in our encounter with Christ. The third movement provides an exegetical account of the sacraments, demonstrating how our encounter of the real presence of Christ in practices generates and sustains our personal relationships with him. The final movement returns to the work of Wells and introduces the work of virtue ethicist Linda Zagzebski to propose that the personal relationship with Christ caused by the Spirit via ecclesial practices leads ultimately to "thick concepts" that are productive of virtue. With these four moves, I will complete my description of the Hookerian account of how the mind of Christ is formed in community. I will conclude the chapter by considering how the Hookerian account answers key critics of the ecclesial ethicists.

In the exegetical treatments found in the third section, I agree with readings of Hooker's account of sacramental practices by Kirby,[462] Shuger,[463] Harrison,[464] and Irish.[465] I disagree with Rasmussen's implication that Hooker sees the bread and wine as channels of the real presence, and argue instead that Hooker evinces the Franciscan "triggering" form of instrumentalism. I disagree with Stafford's description[466] of Hooker's sacramental hermeneutic as "Thomistic" and, instead, see Hooker closely

462. Kirby offers an excellent account of Hooker's understanding of the sanctifying effects of non-sacramental practices. W.J. Torrance Kirby, "Of Musique With Psalms: The Hermeneutics of Richard Hooker's Defence of the 'sensible Excellencie' of Public Worship," in *Lutheran and Anglican: Essays in Honour of Egil Grislis,* ed. John Stafford, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2009).
463. Shuger is especially helpful in recognizing how the Eucharist generates political identity. Debora K. Shuger, ""Societie Supernaturall": The Imagined Community of Hooker's Lawes," in *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies),* ed. Arthur Stephen McGrade, (Mrts, 1997).
464. Harrison, "Powers of Nature and Influences of Grace in Hooker's Lawes,"
465. Irish, "'Participation of God Himself:' Law, the Mediation of Christ, and Sacramental Participation in the Thought of Richard Hooker,"
466. John K. Stafford, "Grace, Sin, and Nature: Richard Hooker's Theology of Baptism," in *Richard Hooker and the English Reformation: Studies in Early Modern Religious Reforms,* (Dordrecht ; Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003).

following Calvin and other Reformed influences. Accordingly, my account largely agrees with the insights of Egil Grislis[467], although my constructive extension of Hooker's 'after a sort' ontology - which Grislis also highlights - naturally diverges from Grislis' historical reconstruction.

THE ECCLESIAL ETHICISTS

When we turn fully to the question of *how* the mind of Christ is formed in community, it is important to recognize that, for Hooker, the crucial means by which that happens includes participation in a well-ordered political society. A well-ordered community is essential to both commonwealth and church because the formal cause of a godly nation is a community of character.[468] Or, rather, Christ himself is that formal cause; the community of character that is the formal cause of godliness and virtue is what "antiquity doth call... Christ's body."[469]

Christ is also the efficient cause of a godly nation. For "Christ doth personally administer the external regiment of outward actions in the Church by the secret inward influence of his grace giveth spiritual life and the strength of ghostly motions thereunto...."[470] Christ causes the outer graces by causing the inner graces. The gift of spiritual life translates the elect into his kingdom and establishes not just a society but a *communion* of saints, an abiding spiritual fellowship:

> These being brought to the obedience of faith are every where spoken of as men translated into that kingdom wherein whosoever is comprehended Christ is the author of eternal salvation in them. They have a high kind of ghostly fellowship with God and Christ and saints....[471]

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467. Egil Grislis, "Reflections on Richard Hooker's Understanding of the Eucharist," in *Richard Hooker and the English Reformation: Studies in Early Modern Religious Reforms,* (Dordrecht ; Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003).
468. Here I allude to a Hauerwas classic on virtue which reflects on this Aristotelian doctrine that Hooker presupposes. Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic*, 1 ed. (University of Notre Dame Press, 1991-01-31).
469. *Laws*.V.77.2; 2.425.14-19
470. L*aws*.VIII.4.5; 3.362.19-22
471. *Laws*.VIII.4.6; 3.365.15-19

For Hooker, liturgical practices - understood in the broadest sense of all the components of our common worship - are essential means of grace through which Christ knits the political society of the elect into a spiritual body. Through ecclesial practices, the mystical society of souls is knitted into something much more than an association of individuals sharing an affinity for the exercise of the Christian religion. As Hooker describes it, that society is indeed knitted into Christ's body.[472]

For Hooker, the sacraments render the elect "*mystical member[s]*" of Christ, causing us to experience "a real transmutation of our souls and bodies from sin to righteousness."[473] Psalm-singing and a bounty of other practices of the church trigger this transformation, rendering the church "both a society and a society supernatural."[474] Indeed the elevation of the hearts of men of common worship and prayer are the very means by which Christ's Spirit transforms "the society of souls"[475] into the "visible mystical body which is his Church."[476]

Crucially for Hooker, the Spirit transforms our common life so that it becomes itself a sacrament that denotes the inner life of God and draws others into it. Discernment of the good therefore happens at the intersection of ecclesiology and Christology. Our question eventually becomes "how do the practices of the Church lead to communities of virtue that denote the triune God?"

Phrasing the question this way helps us to see that our study is ultimately a problem in ecclesial ethics. The question presupposes that the goal of Christian community is to denote the triune God (the resulting ethics ought therefore be eschatological), and it also presupposes a critical connection between those

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472. *Laws*.V.77.2; 2.425.14-19
473. *Laws*.V.67.7; 2.335.32-336.15. Emphasis added.
474. *Laws*.I.15.2; 1:131.10-11
475. *Laws*.V.77.2; 2.425.14-19
476. *Laws*.V.24.1; 2:111.24-27. I am indebted to Debora Shuger for pointing out the richness of Hooker's phrase, "mystical visible body" of Christ. Shuger notes, "*Lawes* posits a visible mystical body united by common agreement on the objects of their love: a community realized in antiphonal chant, sacramental participation, and pastoral care. Hooker views the church as primarily a house of prayer and sacramental worship; he is, moreover, the first Elizabethan Protestant to define the church in this way." Shuger, ""Societie Supernaturall"," 324.

communities and the nurturing of virtue. But this premise is not uncontested. Since Kant, and particularly during Reinhold Niebuhr's era, act consequentialism and deontology have dominated Christian ethics. However, since the 1974 publication of Stanley Hauerwas' *Vision and Virtue*,[477] his 1975 publication of *Character and the Christian Life*,[478] and also the publication in 1981 of Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue!*,[479] there has been a renaissance in the field of virtue ethics.[480] Karl Barth ("speech-acts"), Hans Urs von Balthasar ("deed-words"), Hans Frei ("narrative"), George Lindbeck ("culture"), and Ludwig Wittgenstein ("practice") figure prominently as precursors in this field. This return to classical-medieval approaches to ethics has, in turn, spawned renewed interest in virtue formation as described by Paul, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas. Ecclesial ethicists, who, like Hooker, are highly influenced by Aristotle, often emphasize the practices of the Church as the key to the creation of virtue.

Ecclesial ethics, advocated by a growing number of scholars influenced by Stanley Hauerwas and one of Barth's students, John Howard Yoder, is a form of virtue ethics which may be fairly described as a form of *a posteriori* casuistical reasoning that seeks its foundations in the practices of the Church. It looks to the practices of the Church based on an important theological claim the emphasis of which distinguishes this school from others. The school places great priority on the particularity of Christian community. God chooses to reveal Godself through human contingency - through Israel manifest as the Jews, as Jesus, and as the Church. To abstract from the particularities of community is to depart from God's way of revealing Godself to the world. This school is skeptical of approaches that discover ethical norms in and for the general culture; rather, ethical questions are bounded by Hauerwas' maxim that

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477. Stanley Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue: Essays in Christian Ethical Reflection* (Fides Publishers, 1974).
478. Stanley Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life: A Study in Theological Ethics* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1994).
479. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory, Third Edition* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).
480. Samuel Wells, "How the Church Performs Jesus' Story: Improvising on the Theological Ethics of Stanley Hauerwas" (PhD Dissertation, University of Durham, 1995), 15-17.

"the task of the Church is to be the Church." Ethical questions and answers are particular to concrete Christian communities.

The ecclesial ethicist hermeneutic assumes that the Church bears the truth revealed in Christ in its beliefs, and that one knows what the Church believes through reference to its practices. The Spirit guides the world to grasp the truth about the triune God and itself by creating communities whose words and practices communicate the meanings necessary to reveal that truth. Virtue creation is about learning how to tell reliably the truth about God through our actions. The habits of our common life are therefore an essential part of the Spirit's epistemic role: the practices of the Church are the crucial means by which the Spirit reveals to the world the truth it does not know. If we want to know the truth about God, we turn to our worship, where the Spirit guides our discernment-in-communion so that, in our liturgical practice, we utter the truth about God. If we want to learn about the greatest good, the greatest truth, and the greatest beauty - if we want to inquire about how God meets our needs - we turn in confidence to our sacramental practices because Jesus has promised to meet us there.

Samuel Wells' 1995 Durham University dissertation, *How the Church Performs Jesus' Story: Improvising on the Theological Ethics of Stanley Hauerwas*, is perhaps the most influential recent study in ecclesial ethics. Published in two parts, *Transforming Fate into Destiny: The Theological Ethics of Stanley Hauewas* (2004)[481] and *Improvisation : The Drama of Christian Ethics* (2004),[482] his dissertation extends Hauerwas by adding a much needed eschatological emphasis and by reading him in conversation with Wittgenstein, constructively emphasizing the priority of practice in habit formation. Worship is like a Christian version of the playing fields of Eton, preparing disciples for the eschatological Battle of Waterloo. Through common worship and dramatic immersion in our story (Scripture), the Spirit embeds the mind of Christ in

481. Samuel Wells, *Transforming Fate Into Destiny: The Theological Ethics of Stanley Hauerwas* (Wipf & Stock Pub, 2004-03-04).
482. Wells, *Improvisation*.

community so that disciples can improvise Christianly such that our godly play in the world points to the eschatological reality of which we are the first fruits. Wells develops this further in his *God's Companions: Reimagining Christian Ethics* (2006),[483] showing how every act in the Eucharist and in baptism performs a fundamental truth-claim of the Gospel, forming the mind of Christ in disciples through the repetition of baptism and Eucharist.

Of special interest in the current study are Wells' conclusions about the role of practices and the task of theology. As I described in chapter three, some of Hooker's opponents advocated a Ramist approach to ethical reasoning that involved the mining of timeless absolutes from Scripture in response to questions of right action. Hooker rejected that approach both on hermeneutical and philosophical grounds, maintaining instead the Aristotelian approach which begins with the observation that the material cause of virtue is a virtuous community. Hooker defended the liturgical practices of the Church of England by demonstrating how they contribute to the production of a virtuous community. Hooker argued against a biblicist deontological ethics in favor of a virtue ethics. Wells makes a similar argument:

> When ethics is understood as the adjudication of tricky cases of conscience by balancing moral principles, the practice is implicitly socially conservative - since it assumes there is nothing fundamentally wrong with the status quo, only with its anomalies. In contrast, the Christian community lives within a tradition based on a story which in many respects contradicts the assumptions of the contemporary social status quo. How then does the community faithfully live out its story?[484]

According to Wells, both deontology and acts consequentialism are theological errors.[485] The error involves confusion about the task of Christian ethics. The task is not to defend tradition or a particular ethical conclusion with regard to a proposed act. Rather, the task is "to describe the world in which Christians perceive themselves to live and act, and to help the Christian community form practices consistent with

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483. Samuel Wells, *God's Companions : Reimagining Christian Ethics* (Malden, MA ; Oxford: Blackwell Pub, 2006).
484. Wells, "How the Church Performs Jesus' Story," 198.
485. Wells, *An Introductory Reader*, 154-155.

life in such a world."[486] Wells' allusion to preparing disciples for the Battle of Waterloo highlights the connection between such description and practices: practices are productive of right actions precisely because they instill right descriptions of the world in disciples. In short, practices produce a virtuous community by causing disciples *to take the right things for granted*.[487] I will return to this insight later in the this chapter.[488]

Address and Response

We turn now to an account of *how* ecclesial practices are instrumental in the formation of the mind of Christ in Christian community. Because Hooker is vague or silent on certain relevant questions, my method will be to hold Hooker in conversation with Wells and other contemporary virtue ethicists in order to extrapolate as needed from Hooker's account. Here, as in the preceding sections, the key move is to understand that Hooker defends the formational significance of practices, crafting a subtle synthesis of an Aristotelian account of virtue with an account of being and a psychology that are sensitive to sixteenth century philosophical concerns. The next two sections explain how they function particularly in baptism and the Eucharist, respectively. On the basis of this account, we can render a general account of practices which holds that common worship and sacramental practices are signs and tokens by which the Spirit draws us to recognize and respond to our relation to Christ the Reconciler, grasping and transforming both the "common multitude" and elite, generating the political identity, diversity, and virtue of the visible mystical body of Christ.

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486. Ibid.
487. Wells, "How the Church Performs Jesus' Story," 216.
488. See "Mimetic virtue" on page 186.

Dispositions revealed

We saw in chapter two that Hooker's ontology and psychology retain Aristotelian emphases on the contingency of events and the significance of virtue in making the moral life nonetheless possible, while expressing these emphases within an account of being that is sensitive to Reformation concerns about the implications of human finitude.[489] We have seen throughout this study that Hooker tends to describe objective reality in terms of the space of causes: there is a form of relation that is proper to all created things that we can depict in terms of the presence of a cause in its effects. We know objective reality directly through imperfect empirical observation and inferences of causal relations.[490]

Yet, how can a personal God be known personally given the gulf between the finite self and its divine ground? In the preceding chapter, I argued that the Hookerian account answers with an ontology that locates such possibility not within the space of causes but within the space of reasons.[491] In short, there is a kind of knowing, born of our shared history and experienced as shared communion, that is not constituted by "an empirical description of [an] episode or state" but which subsists "in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says."[492] Our identity as rational *persons* is constituted, not by our humanity, but by our sociality, our activity and our participation in a history. Our knowing of other rational and communicative creatures, whether human or non-human, consists of an actual sharing in their sociality, in interactions with them, and in a sharing in their history. Our knowing of such persons is not reducible to epistemic facts.

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489. See "Hookerian anthropology" on page 52.
490. See, for example, "Hookerian epistemology" on page 59. See also "Universal participation in Christ" on page 122.
491. Hooker, of course, did not use Sellar's language. The contemporary philosophical grammar reflects my constructive proposal which makes explicit that in only implicit in Hooker's account. See "Real presence" beginning on page 135.
492. John McDowell, *Sellars and the Space of Reasons*. (lecture., University of Pittsburgh, 2009), http://www.pitt.edu/~brandom/me-core/downloads/McD Cape Town talk--Sellars EPM.doc. In context, McDowell quotes Sellars, *Science, Perception and Reality*, Part VIII, § 106.36.

Agency and community

It is a convenient fiction to describe the psychology of individuals as though individuals can be isolated from the community of which they are a part. It is also a convenient fiction to speak of the community as though we can set aside momentarily the reality of the agency of individuals. The truth, however, is that these two cannot be separated, for they are mutually articulating.

In the preceding chapter, I described the development of interpersonal relationships in terms of address and response. We experience ourselves as addressed by another subject and we respond to them. The sequence of such calls and responses - our shared history - generates a personal relationship. As the subject addresses us successively, he reveals his dispositions, and we become able to make justifiable claims about his nature. We, as subjects, recognize him as subject. We know him.

Yet this pattern of address and response does not happen in a vacuum. It happens within a community. A disciple who dwells in the divine rationality necessarily does so as one whose identity is shaped by community, and not by just one community, but by the many circles of which she is a part. To the extent that she is a free and rational agent, she responds to an address by a single subject from within the web of her communal circles, simultaneously constraining and directing her responses to that address according to the norms of her circles. In her response to the one subject, she, at least tacitly, addresses her other circles, engaging and shaping their norms dialogically.

Address and response between two subjects regarding matters of action are never private affairs, though at times we like to pretend they are. They are inherently communal and dialectical, articulating our communally-shaped descriptions of the world and our own locations within it. Addressing and responding to fellow subjects in our practical reasoning, we continuously adjudicate our normative descriptions and judgments. “Practical reason,” therefore, is “a kind of interchange of attempts at

justification among persons, each of whose actions affect what others would otherwise be able to do, and all this for a community at a time."[493] Our practical reasoning is thus itself a communal practice.[494]

This leads to what may now be an obvious fact about the specific judgments we render as we respond to those who address us. Our responses are not shaped merely by the communal norms that pertain to specific premises; they are determined as well by the community's practice of moral reasoning itself.[495] The way a community determines what questions may be asked and what serves as justifiable reasons communicate a worldview that, in turn, affects one's ethical reasoning.[496]

Much can be deduced from this observation, but my interest now is simply to thicken our view of the narrative situatedness of the calls and responses of our interpersonal relations. The community shapes individual agency in both how we hear that which is addressed to us and how we determine our free and rational responses. The questions we feel free to ask and the reasons that are normatively available to justify our beliefs and actions influence profoundly how we adjudicate our descriptions of the world and our place in it.

The interpersonal relation in view in this study is of course that between Christ and each of his elect. Isolating the single subject's relation to Christ simplifies analysis, but, of course, the dynamic is more complex. The community determines to a significant degree how we hear ourselves as addressed by Christ and also how we determine our free and rational response. All of this has significant implications for how we order the Church, the hermeneutics we validate, and the form of our ethical reasoning, and highlights the importance of such decisions for each generation. My concern here, however, is to accentuate the specificity of our personal address by

493. Robert B. Pippin, *Hegel's Practical Philosophy: Rational Agency as Ethical Life*, 1 ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2008-11-17), 273-274.
494. Ibid., 273.
495. Ibid., 276.
496. I examine Hooker's critique of appeals to timeless absolutes throughout chapter three. See "Hookerian critique: Reasoning by non sequitur" on page 103.

Christ. Though we hear his call always within a social circle which qualifies our hearing, Christ calls us by name.[497]

We saw in the previous chapter that we participate in Christ by recognizing his real and justifying presence. Christ justifies, giving his indwelling and personal presence, and such presence constitutes the forgiveness of sins and the gift of God himself. The foregoing helps us to anticipate another difficulty with universal ethics.[498] As we saw in chapter three, it is "the particular information, which universal ethics shuns, that makes ethics comprehensible."[499] Christ does not reconcile us in the abstract; nor does he address us in the abstract. Christ's Spirit meets us personally, reconciling us in our particularity. To be coherently Christocentric, our ethics should reflect this particularity.[500]

Agency oriented theodramatically

Sam Wells, in *Improvisation*, provides such an approach to ethics. Just as Jesus Christ met the Samaritan woman at the well, redirecting her to the water of life,[501] so he meets us where we stand, teaching us to see the world as it is redeemed by him, and to carry on in such a way that our lives proclaim that eschatological reality.

Wells' improvisational ethics combines the recognition that ethical reasoning consists of phronetic judgments with a crucial eschatological dimension. As he notes, it is insufficient for Christian ethics to be merely teleological; to be proper Christian ethics, they must be eschatological:

> Eschatology brings a shape to Christian theology and in turn to Christian ethics. By providing an end to the story it enables us to perceive that the Christian narrative is indeed a story, not an endless sequence of events. Since the end is provided from outside, it is not humanity's task to bring this end about. Christian ethics is therefore about acting in accord with the ending that will come about, rather than acting so that a desirable end will come about.[502]

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497. "But now, says the LORD — the one who created you, Jacob, the one who formed you, Israel: Don't fear, for I have redeemed you; *I have called you by name*; you are mine." (Is 43:1 CEB) Emphasis added.
498. Wells, *An Introductory Reader*., 154-5.
499. Ibid., 155.
500. See note 285 on page 97 on my usage of 'particularity' throughout this study.
501. Wells, *Improvisation*., 103-114.
502. Wells, "How the Church Performs Jesus' Story".189.

Because Christian ethics are properly eschatological, Christian ethics are neither merely creation-centric nor merely biblical ethics. Neither are they pre-social or primordial or in any sense ahistorical. That is, Christian agency is properly oriented on an axis beginning with the creation stories, through the drama of Israel culminating in Jesus and his Church, and ending in the biblical vision of the New Jerusalem. Such ethics exegete creation eschatologically . Taking the right things for granted therefore involves first and foremost the capacity for an individual to be knowledgeable of and attentive to the great drama of God (theodrama). Moreover, it requires that the Christian see oneself as an actor immersed in that drama. Drawing upon Wittgenstein, Wells teaches that the ethical life is about going on in the same way as those who went before us in the theodrama, while responding responsibly to stimuli within our own context, where responding responsibly consists of going on in such a way that our actions go in the same way as those who succeed us. That is, our actions should be in continuity with the stories of Israel, Jesus, and the Church while also pointing eschatologically to the eternal reality of the New Jerusalem. The crucial dimension that Wells adds is this last eschatological dimension.

The role of practices

Hooker's account of practices

In the preceding section, I suggested that a properly Christocentric ethics reflects the specificity of our address by and response to Christ. I also suggested, following Wells, that such an ethics helps us to locate ourselves within Christ's temporal drama, and reorients us toward the New Jerusalem.

With these qualifications registered, I turn now to Hooker's account of practices. The key move is to recognize that ecclesial practices are the primary means by which Christ schools us in his nature by revealing his gracious disposition towards his creation and towards us personally. Practices provide the setting of our successive

encounters with Christ's real presence through which the Spirit forms our personal relationship with him.

We know Christ personally by sharing in his life. But that sharing in his life is possible only because God acts to make such sharing possible. Given the subjective and rational reality of our personal participation in Christ's life *through ecclesial practices*, Christ's love for us becomes intelligible, and we are thereby justified in willing what Christ wills and making claims about his nature. Because of this intelligibility, we know him and respond responsibly, which is to say we respond with worship and obedience to his summons.

Non-sacramental practices

Before turning to Hooker's account of sacramental practices, it is important to recall what I noted in the previous chapter - that consideration of how Christ is present in the sacraments is decisive for our understanding of how Christ is present in all ecclesial practices, and therefore decisive for our understanding of the role of practices in the formation of Christ in community.[503] This focus on the sacraments ought not lead one to conclude that Christ is in some sense less present in non-sacramental practices, or that the aforementioned principles of practices apply only to sacramental practices. While the sacraments are indeed central, Hooker saw Christ's sanctifying presence in and defended as edifying a wide range of non-sacramental practices. It is no accident that Book V of his *Laws* is the largest of his works. It contains eighty-one chapters, most of which defend non-sacramental ecclesial practices. Hooker defends the use of beautiful church buildings,[504] reading Scripture publicly,[505] public and common prayer,[506] singing of psalms,[507] commemoration of

503. See page 128.
504. *Laws*.V.11-17.
505. *Laws*.V.18-22.
506. *Laws*.V.23-36, 41-49.
507. *Laws*.V.37-40.

exemplars and other festivals of the Church,[508] fasting,[509] the churching of women,[510] ordination practices,[511] and the rite of reconciliation.[512] While the sacraments are indeed unique, the principles of practices apply to a wide range of ecclesial acts which sanctify to the extent that they successively represent Christ in the heart of the disciple.

It is ironic that Hooker's emphasis on practices was criticized by his fellow Puritans as Pelagian or seen as evidence of his affinity for Rome.[513] To the contrary, an emphasis on ecclesial practices such as those he defended - and many more which could be added today - is "more realistic about sin and more hopeful about reconciliation than those approaches that trust the reason/nature/creation complex to derive our knowledge of what should be from what is."[514] In that sense, it is a profoundly *evangelical* commitment, in the richest sense of the word:

> For some the label 'evangelical' points to a checklist of traditional doctrines and for others to a key inner experience. I mean neither. For a practice to qualify as 'evangelical' in the functional sense means first of all that it communicates news. It says something particular that would not be known and could not be believed were it not said. Second, it must mean functionally that this 'news' is attested as good; it comes across to those whom it addresses as helping, as saving, and as *shalom*. It must be public, not esoteric, but the way for it to be public is not an *a priori* logical move that subtracts the particular. It is an *a posteriori* political practice that tells the world something it did not know and could not believe before. It tells the world what is the world's own calling and destiny, not by announcing either a utopian or a realistic goal to be imposed on the whole society, but by pioneering, a paradigmatic demonstration of both the power and the practices that define the shape of restored humanity. The confessing people of God is the new world on its way.[515]

Psalm-singing

One example will suffice to demonstrate Hooker's claim. In Book V of *Laws*, Hooker defends the liturgical practice of singing psalms. The music of psalms transforms us, creating harmony within us through its etching of God's harmonizing

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508. *Laws*.V.69-71.
509. *Laws*.V.72.
510. *Laws*.V.74.
511. *Laws*.V.76-81.
512. *Laws*.VI.1-6.
513. This is the thrust of the only effort to refute *Laws* published during Hooker's lifetime, *A Christian Letter*. See "A Christian Letter,"
514. Yoder, "Sacrament as Social Process: Christ the Transformer of Culture," 371.
515. Ibid., 373.. Emphasis original.

Word in our minds:

> The reason hereof is an admirable facility which music hath to express and represent to the mind more inwardly than any other sensible means the very standing, rising, and falling, the very steps and inflections every way, the turns and varieties of all passions whereunto the mind is subject, yea so to imitate them, that whither it resemble unto us the same state wherein our minds already are or a clean contrary, we are not more contentedly by the one confirmed than changed and led away by the other. In harmony the very image and character even of virtue and vice is perceived, the mind delighted with their resemblances and brought by having them often iterated into a love of the things themselves.[516]

Hooker quotes St. Basil to support his claim that the singing of psalms is a means of grace by which the seed of virtue is planted in the community:

> [Quoting St. Basil:] For (saith he) whereas the holy spirit saw that mankind is unto virtue hardly drawn, and that righteousness is the less accounted of by reason of the proneness of our affections to that which which delighteth, it pleased the wisdom of the same spirit to borrow from melody that pleasure, which mingled with heavenly mysteries, causeth the smoothness and softness of that which toucheth the ear, to convey as it were by stealth the treasure of good things into man's mind. To this purpose were those harmonious tunes of psalms devised for us, that they which are either in years but young, or touching perfection of virtue as yet not grown to ripeness, might when they think they sing, learn. O the wise conceit of the heavenly teacher, which hath by his skill found out a way, that doing those things wherein we delight, we may also learn that whereby we profit.[517]

Christ's Spirit uses the singing of psalms to transform the society of the elect into a community by "strengthen[ing] our meditation of those holy words,... mak[ing us] attentive, and... raising up the hearts of men...."[518] The music of psalms is

> ... a thing whereunto God's people of old did resort with hope and thirst that thereby especially their souls might be edified; a thing which filleth the mind with comfort and heavenly delight, stirreth up flagrant desires and affections correspondent unto that which the words contain, allayeth all kind of base and earthly cogitations, banisheth and driveth away those evil secret suggestions which our invisible enemy is always apt to minister, watereth the heart to the end it may fructify, maketh the virtuous in trouble full of magnanimity and courage, serveth as a most approved remedy against all doleful and heavy accidents which befall men in this present life....[519]

Some principles particular to the sacraments

Some ground-clearing is necessary before I proceed to the task of analyzing in more detail Hooker's account of how practices form the mind of Christ in community. The necessity arises from the fact that Hooker distinguishes between the

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516. *Lawes* V.38.1; 2:151.14-24
517. *Laws*.V.38.3; 2:153.17-154.4
518. *Laws*.V.39.4; 2:15-18
519. *Laws*.V.39.4; 2:158.18-29

sacraments of baptism and Eucharist and other ecclesial practices because of the special roles they play in the creation and sustenance of Christian community.

That the sacraments have a unique and necessary role is not obvious to all contemporary Christian communities, and it was not obvious to many of Hooker's contemporaries, either. The hope of Hooker's sponsors was that his treatise would successfully defend the Elizabethan Settlement against English presbyterian opponents, and a major part of that effort was a defense of the rites and ceremonies of the English church. Yet, even Hooker's sponsors were not persuaded of the *mystical* significance of the sacraments. Hooker's primary sponsor, Archbishop Whitgift, defended the rites by ridding them of their mystical content, valuing them merely as formal acts that were the only objective evidence available by which one could discern one's participation in the visible church. Moreover, this objective evidence was sufficient because faith, for Whitgift, was an act of the intellect entirely. As Lake put it in his review of Whitgift's works, "all that was necessary to induce true belief was the availability of right doctrine (either preached or read)."[520]

Implicit in this view are three significant premises commonly held by both Hooker's contemporaries and by many Christians today. First, the understanding of faith as an act of the intellect that is induced by exposure to right doctrine implies an understanding that knowledge is primarily cognitive; that is, it implies that to know is to master concepts or propositions that are true. This contrasts profoundly with the conjunctive account of fellowship with Christ presented in this study - the idea of a personal knowing grounded in a shared history. Second, if the cure for unbelief is right information, then to edify is to provide right information. Indeed, Whitgift made this explicit. His defense of the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England denied sacraments the duty of edification.[521] Finally, the position that faith is preceded and caused by knowledge of right doctrine (and that edification consists of imparting right

520. Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans*, 39.
521. Ibid.

doctrine) implies that the central concern of the Church should be justification of the individual. Faith is understood exclusively in terms of justifying faith, and thus edification is, too. An inability to conceive of faith primarily in the grammar of sanctification, a de-mystified account of the sacraments, a laser-like focus on the justification of individuals, and a fear of Pelagianism circumscribe one's ability to imagine sacramental practices as primary means by which the mind of Christ is mystically formed in community over time. All of these positions can be found in contemporary Christian communities. The Hookerian account challenges these premises.

These issues turn on the question of the purpose of the sacraments. Hooker dismisses unequivocally the claim that "all the benefit we reap by sacraments be instruction:"[522] "It greatly offendeth that some, when they labor to show the use of the holy sacraments, assign unto them no end but only *to teach* the mind, by other senses, that which the word doth teach by hearing."[523] If that is all the sacraments do, then rational communities will set aside the sacraments in favor of preaching, which is a much more efficient form of instruction.[524] But if sacraments do more, then these communities act irrationally.

Hooker similarly dismisses conceptions of the sacraments in terms of "bare *resemblances* or memorials of things absent, neither for *naked* signs and testimonies assuring us of grace received before."[525] To the contrary, Hooker asserts, introducing the instrumentality principle, the sacraments are "means effectual whereby God when we take the sacraments delivereth into our hands that grace available unto eternal life, which grace the sacraments represent or signify."[526]

Depending on one's perspective, one can ascribe sundry secondary purposes to the

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522. *Laws*.V.57.1 2:245.1-6
523. *Laws*.V.57.1 2:244.28-31.
524. *Laws*.V.57.1 2:245.1-6
525. *Laws*.V.57.5; 2:247.16-22. Emphasis original.
526. *Laws*.V.57.5; 2:247.16-22.

sacraments, but their primary purpose derives from their role in the covenant of grace:

> ... their chiefest force and virtue consisteth... in that they are heavenly ceremonies, which God hath sanctified and ordained to be administered in his Church, first as marks whereby to know when God doth impart the vital or saving grace of Christ unto all that are of capable thereof, and secondly as means conditional which God requireth in them unto whom he imparteth grace.[527]

Hooker names two ways that the sacraments fulfill their chief role in the covenant of grace. In the first of these, Hooker agrees with Archbishop Whitgift in affirming their formal character as objective marks of Christ's presence to his Church. Because God is invisible, God blesses Christians by giving "them some plain and sensible token whereby to know what they cannot see."[528] Through the sacraments, "Christ and his holy Spirit with all their blessed effects... give notice of the times when they use to make their access, because it pleaseth almighty God to communicate by sensible means those blessings which are incomprehensible."[529]

But Hooker adds a caveat mandated by the covenant: the sacraments are a "means conditional" by which God imparts grace. As Hooker later clarifies, "Neither is it *ordinarily* his will to bestow the grace of sacraments on any, but by the sacraments."[530] The sacraments are not just a means of instruction, and not just a visible sign of Christ's real presence, but are a means of grace bestowed only through their performance - with few exceptions that are not of interest to the present study.

We encounter here an obstacle to interpretation. Hooker is not always consistent in his use of the word 'grace.' Usually 'grace' serves synonymously with what I have denoted variously by "the local presence of Christ's whole person" or "Christ's real presence" or "Christ and his Spirit's presence." But sometimes Hooker uses grace to denote "Christ's real presence, along with his blessed effects." That is, sometimes grace also includes particular consequences of Christ's presence that are particular to the context of that presence. For example, in baptism, the grace bestowed includes

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527. *Laws*.V.57.3 2:245.31-246.2.
528. *Laws*.V.57.3 2:246.2-7.
529. *Laws*.V.57.3 2:246.15-20
530. *Laws*.V.57.4; 2: 246.32-33.

both Christ's real presence and the impartation of that justifying faith associated with the seed of God, whereas in the Lord's Supper, the grace bestowed includes both Christ's real presence and the sanctifying effects that perfect us by degrees over the course of our lives.[531] In all cases, grace means, at minimum, the real presence of Christ to the individual believer and the Church.

The final ground-clearing task is simply to note that which has been observed previously: that the assurance of our encounter with the real presence of Christ comes not from an innate capacity to participate in the Divine Mind through intellection of transcendentals, but entirely as a consequence of the covenant of grace. But those covenantal promises are sufficient for us to boldly approach the throne of grace:

> That saving grace which Christ originally is or hath for the general good of his whole Church, by sacraments he severally deriveth into every member thereof; sacraments serve as the instruments of God to that end and purpose, moral instruments the use whereof is in our hands the effect in his; for the use we have his express commandment, for the effect his conditional promise; so that without our obedience to the one there is of the other no apparent assurance, as contrariwise where the signs and sacraments of his grace are not either through contempt unreceived or received with contempt, we are not to doubt but that they really give what they promise, and are what they signify.[532]

At the conclusion of my examination of Ramist realism in chapter three, I noted Hooker's implication that no Ramist shortcut can provide an objective foundation upon which to base our ethical reasoning. I began the last chapter with the question, "Is there an objective ground for our judgments of the good?" Here, at last, we find our answer. "We are not to doubt but that they really give what they promise, and are what they signify." For the Hookerian account, there is indeed an objective foundation from which arises our recognition of the good. The epistemic ground is proclaimed in the covenant of grace: Christ's divine promise to be present to the faithful in our sacramental fellowship with him. The epistemic ground is none other than Christ himself, who gives himself in fellowship in the sacraments.

In what follows, I will examine Hooker's connection between this epistemic

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531. *Laws*.V.57.6; 2:248.4-14
532. *Laws*.V.57.5; 2:247.5-16.

ground, our sacramental practices, and the development of Christian character in the minds of the elect. By considering the principles of instrumentality and rationality in baptism and eucharist, we will see that Hooker associates transformation of the minds of the elect in the encounter with Christ during ecclesial practices.[533]

Instrumentality in practices

Hooker's account of practices manifests the principle of instrumentality. The principle of instrumentality holds that the role in practices of ordinary things is not to be vessels of Christ's real presence, but, rather, simultaneously to enact and to proclaim the personal relationship that constitutes Christ's real presence to us. The word 'vessel' in this is significant. A vessel carries a thing within its boundaries; it is a container, a receptacle. So the principle of instrumentality is a claim that, on Hooker's account, ordinary created things do not themselves carry or contain Christ's real presence. They are not channels of grace themselves. Rather, they are instruments of grace that make Christ's real presence intelligible to us.

In his commentary on sacraments in general, Hooker notes an integral connection between the particular grace to be conveyed and the common utility of the elements selected: "Grace intended by sacraments was a cause of the choice, and is a reason of the fitness of the elements themselves."[534] Fitness of use is a quality of instruments. But instruments can be channels or conveyors as well as implements, so the attribute of fitness does not clarify Hooker's instrumentalism sufficiently.

This distinction is of interest because the Reformed streams, going back to the debates leading to the *Consensus Tigurinus*, divided on the question of the nature of instrumentalism in the sacraments. Influenced by older debates between Thomists

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533. Hooker evinces a pragmatic view of baptism, concerning himself much less than Barth with the distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* participation in Christ. Barth sought to protect in his descriptions "the freedom and sovereignty of God or the perfection of Jesus Christ's person and work, and indeed...cohere[nce] with his pneumatology, theology of the resurrection, and indeed his view of participation in Christ in general." In contrast, Hooker's focus was on ecclesiology. In an era in which Puritan colleagues pressed for exclusion of the ungodly from the Church of England, Hooker emphasized the objective nature of the visible church as the only church we are ordained to govern. Neder, *Participation in Christ*, 84.

534. *Laws*.V.58.1; 2:248.19-25.

and Franciscans, Reformers advocated different forms, with the more Lutheran view embracing the Thomist sense of instrumentalism that might loosely be described as "channeling" and those influenced by Bullinger embracing the Franciscan sense of "triggering."[535]

Triggering avoids any suggestion that the elements are secondary causes: the elements, by the agency of the Spirit, render a particular state in the partaker. For example, the rainbow triggered in the faithful descendants of Noah confidence in God's promise never again to destroy the world by flood (Genesis 8:1 - 9:17), yet the rainbow did not thereby become a cause of that effect. The Spirit alone was the cause of such confidence, working in the hearts of the faithful to render in them a state of confidence concomitant with their sighting of the rainbow.[536] The rainbow is an instrument in the Franciscan sense of triggering, but not in the Thomist sense of channeling.

This example helps us to locate Hooker firmly in the Franciscan camp with respect to instrumentality in the sacraments. For he cites a similar example - that of Moses and the serpent - in clarifying the relation between grace and the elements:

> Which grace also they that receive by sacraments or with sacraments, receive it from him and not from them. For of sacraments the very same is true which Solomon's wisdom observeth in the brazen serpent,"He that turned towards it was not healed by the thing he saw, but by thee O savior of all." This is therefore the necessity of sacraments.[537]

This suggests that Hooker is consistent with the *Consensus Tigurinus* in seeing the elements as *organum* of grace in the sense of triggers of the effects caused by the Spirit.[538] The elements are not vessels or channels of grace. Indeed, the elements

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535. John H. Leith and W. Stacy. Johnson, *Calvin Studies Iv : Presented At a Colloquium on Calvin Studies At Davidson College and Davidson College Presbyterian Church, Davidson, North Carolina* (Davidson, NC: Davidson College, 1988). See also Reinhold Seeberg, *Text-Book of the History of Doctrines*, trans. Charles E. Hay, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1952), 2:126-127.
536. I am indebted to my colleague, Tom McGlothlin, for this illustration.
537. *Laws*.V.57.4; 2: 246.30 - 247.5; Hooker quotes Wisdom 16:7. Cf. Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. IV.14.18.
538. Heinrich Bullinger and John Calvin, "*Consensus Tigurinus*," *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical notes*, http://www.creeds.net/reformed/Tigurinus/tigur-latin.htm (accessed July 12, 2013).

"contain *in themselves* no vital force of efficacy, they are not physical but *moral instruments* of salvation, duties of service and worship, which unless we perform as the author of grace requireth, they are unprofitable."[539]

Defending the necessity of baptism, Hooker establishes explicitly the instrumentality of the water. Baptism is not "a cause for grace, yet the grace which is given them with their baptism doth so far forth depend on the very outward sacrament that God will have it embraced not only as a sign or token what we receive, but also as an *instrument* or mean whereby we receive grace...."[540]

From this we can conclude that Hooker's account of baptism exhibits the principle of instrumentality: neither the water nor the ordinary washing it achieves are vessels of Christ's real presence. Rather, the outer act of washing by water, when combined with the words explaining God's inner action of washing away sin, simultaneously enacts and proclaims the personal relationship that constitutes Christ's real presence to us, and, in that encounter, renders the effects that the Spirit intends.

As we consider the Eucharist, it is necessary to distinguish the principle of instrumentality developed here. Hooker offers an instrumentalist view of the Eucharist that, in his assessment, renders the theories of consubstantiation and transubstantiation "unnecessary."[541] My interest here is not to engage his dismissal of these theories but to follow his particular application of the principle of instrumentality. His usage differs from that of Aquinas, who also offered an instrumentalist view of the Eucharist. As Liam Walsh notes, Aquinas held that "[Christ's] humanity, joined to his divinity in hypostatic union, is an attached *instrument* of the divine; his sacraments are detached *instruments* by which the divine causality of grace, active in his humanity, reaches humans in place and time."[542] Hooker, with Calvin, did not embrace the Thomist notion of secondary causation. As

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539. *Laws*.V.57.4; 2:246.20-30. Emphasis original.
540. *Laws*.V.60.2; 2:255.1-6. Emphasis added.
541. *Laws*.V.67.11; 2:340.10-15.
542. Liam Walsh, "Sacraments," in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas,* ed. Rik Van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow, (University of Notre Dame Press, 2010-08-15), 347.

we shall see, the physical elements of the sacraments are instruments on Hooker's account, too, but only as a result of their contingent usage by God in fulfillment of the covenant of grace.

Hooker is explicit in his affirmation of the instrumentality of the bread and the wine. In reflecting on how best to interpret the words of institution, he notes, "The bread and cup are his body and blood because they are causes instrumental upon the receipt whereof the *participation* of his body and blood ensueth."[543] He clarifies how this instrumentality is manifest in contrasting Lutheran and Roman views with his own account. The proper exposition of Christ's words of institution are:

> This hallowed food, though concurrence of divine power, is in verity and truth, unto faithful believers, *instrumentally* a cause of that mystical participation, whereby as I make myself wholly theirs, so I give them in hand an actual possession of all such saving grace as my sacrificed body can yield, and as their souls do presently need, this is 'to them and in them' my body....[544]

This pithy summary is a dense application of Hooker's principle of instrumentality. Some unpacking is in order.

"This is 'to them and in them'" affirms the real presence of Christ in the sacrament but locates that presence in the faithful believer: "The real presence of Christ's most blessed body and blood is not therefore to be sought for in the sacrament, but in the worthy receiver of the sacrament."[545] Hooker emphasizes that the sacrament "exhibit[s]" grace but "they are not really nor do really contain in themselves that grace which with them or by them it pleaseth God to bestow."[546] Rather, the Spirit acts to render the transformation of bread and wine in the heart and soul of the worthy receiver:

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543. *Laws*.V.67.5; 2:334.16-19. Emphasis original.
544. *Laws*.V.67.12; 2: 341.1-7, Emphasis added.
545. *Laws*.V.67.5;2:334.30-32.
546. *Laws*.V.67.6;2:335.7-10.

> I see not which way it should be gathered by the words of Christ when and where the bread is his body and or the cup his blood but only in the very heart and soul of him which receiveth them.[547]

Though the elements themselves are not to be identified as themselves the real presence of Christ, and are not to be described as containers of his real presence, Christ is nonetheless "wholly theirs"[548] by virtue of "that mystical participation"[549] caused by Christ's Spirit. Hooker cites Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Theoderet to explain how this is so:

> Christ is personally there present, yea present whole, albeit a part of Christ be corporally absent from thence; that Christ assisting this heavenly banquet with his personal and true presence doth by his own divine power add to the natural substance thereof supernatural efficacy which addition to the nature of those consecrated elements changeth them and maketh them that unto us which otherwise they could not be; that to us they are thereby made such instruments as mystically yet truly, invisibly yet really work our communion or fellowship with the person of Jesus Christ as well in that he is man as God, our participation also in the fruit, grace, and efficacy of his body and blood, whereupon there ensueth a kind of transubstantiation in us, a true change both of soul and body, an alteration from death to life.[550]

The elements neither are the real presence nor contain the real presence, and neither are their natural properties changed such that they no longer are what they are naturally. Rather, they are rendered more than they naturally are only for the worthy receiver. To their natural substance is added an "efficacy" that changes and makes them "unto us which otherwise they could not be." Specifically, the Spirit uses "such instruments" to create "our communion or fellowship with the person of Jesus Christ" and also to cause "our participation also in the fruit, grace, and efficacy of his body and blood."

This is more readily understood by reference to my earlier example of the rainbow.[551] God chose to use the rainbow as a sign of his promise never again to destroy the earth by flood. The rainbow, of course, remains the natural phenomenon it was before God chose to adopt it for this purpose, and the natural phenomenon is

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547. *Laws*.V.67.6;2:335.3-6.
548. *Laws*.V.67.12; 2: 341.4.
549. *Laws*.V.67.12; 2: 341.3-4.
550. *Laws*.V..67.11; 2:338.14-340.4
551. Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV.14.18.

itself not to be confused with the divine restraint. Nonetheless, once God decided to use the rainbow for the new purpose of being a sign of his covenant faithfulness, the ordinary rainbow gained a supernatural efficacy. Something was added to it that rendered it no longer what it naturally is, at least when it is beheld by the heirs to God's promise. Its *ontology* has been changed by divine decree though its *physical* properties remain unchanged.

God used an ordinary physical thing to edify Noah in his faith. There is a cause and effect relationship here, but the cause is not contained in the rainbow. Rather, the Spirit alone is the cause, and the role of the rainbow is whatever the Spirit makes of it. Similarly, the effects are not contained in the rainbow. Rather, the edifying effect is triggered by the sign of the rainbow, manifested entirely within the heart and soul of the worthy receiver.

In like fashion, Christ chose to use ordinary things like wine and bread as signs of his promise always to be Christ-with-us. The wine and bread remain what they were before Christ chose to use them for this purpose. They are not to be confused with the real presence they signify. Once Christ decided to use them as signs of the New Covenant of his Body and Blood, the bread and wine gained a supernatural efficacy. When consecrated, something is added to them that renders them no longer what they naturally are, at least when beheld by those who trust in Christ's promise. What they are - their being - changes, though their physical properties remain unchanged.[552] Their being changes solely because of the additional role that Christ the Creator assigned them within his covenant of grace. When consecrated, they become sure signs of his real presence, edifying those who consume them in faith.

The cause of our sanctification, Christ's real presence, is not contained in the bread and wine. Rather, the Spirit alone is the cause, and the role of the elements is whatever the Spirit makes of them. Similarly, the edifying effects of the sacrament are not contained in the elements. Rather, the edifying effects are instrumentally

552. I am indebted to Tom McGlothlin for this illustration.

triggered by the elements, manifested entirely in the heart and soul of the worthy receiver.

From this we can see that the Hooker's particular form of instrumentalism in the Eucharist is coherent with that derived from first principles above. Ordinary things like water, bread, and wine are not channels of grace themselves. Rather, they are instruments of grace that make Christ's real presence intelligible to us. And we, and not the elements themselves, are acted upon in the sacrament. For when we remember him, we ourselves are re-membered. On this basis, Hooker is able to offer his famous observation that it is not the bread and wine that are transformed, but us: "there ensueth a kind of transubstantiation *in us*, a true change both of soul and body, an alteration from death to life."[553]

In the next section, we will see that this transubstantiation in us occurs through our reunion with Christ, a reunion described in the grammar of the logical space of reasons.

Rationality in practices

It is fundamental to our Hookerian account that the *telos* of humans is to participate in the rationality of God. The principle of rationality holds that our participation in the life of God takes place in the logical space of reasons. This is not to say that faith consists of assent to propositions or that faith is merely intellectual, but rather to say that participation is experienced as a knowing of the whole person of Christ through our communicative nature, our interactions, and our shared history with him. Christ's reconciling actions for us are rendered intelligible and become

553. *Laws*.V..67.11; 2:339.7-340.1. Emphasis added. Note that the edifying effects of the sacrament do not entail a material washing away of a sinful substance or a material transformation of the properties of the human. Rather the transubstantiation of the human entails an ontological transformation, an alteration from death to life. This is remarkably similar to Barth's account. As Neder notes, "He offers an alternative account in which human participation in God occurs not on the level of a cleansing or transformation of human nature (substantially understood) by either the divine "essence" or "energies," but rather as an event of covenant fellowship in which human beings do not become gods, but rather the human beings they were created to be." Neder, *Participation in Christ*, 45.

known by our rational faculties.

Hooker does not focus much, in his treatment of baptism within *Laws,* on the rational nature of our participation. This is most likely because his primary concern in *Laws* is sanctification and not justification, and so he satisfies himself mostly with brief references to the imparting of the seed of God within the soul of the baptized. However, some evidence that Hooker locates the participatory element of baptism in the logical space of reasons is visible in the way he describes the role of the rite in our ongoing relationship with Christ. In discussing the significance of Christ's words in instituting the baptismal rite and the necessity of its physical action and spoken words, he describes baptism as a door into the household of God and a first step in our journey of sanctification. It is:

> ... baptism which both declareth and maketh us Christians. In which respect we justly hold it to be the door of our actual entrance into God's house, the first apparent beginning of life, a seal perhaps to the grace of election before received, but to our sanctification here a step that hath not any before it.[554]

Designation of baptism as a door and a first step in an ongoing journey reflect the language of event and history. Hooker is clear in declaring that baptism initiates a new relationship, or at least a new stage in a largely unrealized relationship. The event described is that of the subject, Christ, acting upon another subject, the baptized, and, as such, the event is, formally, the first *personal* interaction between Christ and the baptized. The event is seen as the beginning of a history that will be shared and ongoing. The consequence of the event is the occupation of the heart of the baptized by Christ's Spirit such that Christ's actions become communicable and intelligible to the baptized in the sense of providing justification for beliefs about Christ. Sociality, interaction, shared history, and intelligibility of final causes - these are the coordinates of the logical space of reasons.

Lest we be uncertain of this, we need only turn to Hooker's *Learned Discourse of*

554. *Laws*.V.5.60.3; 2:256.16-26.

Justification wherein he considers justifying faith, the bestowal of which is marked by the baptismal event. Christ's Spirit:

> ... inhabit[s] and possess[es] the mind.... As the light of nature doth cause the mind to apprehend those truths which are merely rational, so that saving truth, which is far above the reach of human reason, cannot otherwise than by the Spirit of the Almighty be conceived.[555]

Hooker develops this observation regarding the rational nature of our participation in his defense of the use of interrogatories in the baptismal rite. He notes that "We find by experience that... faith be an intellectual habit of the mind and have her seat in the understanding."[556] The rational nature of faith, however, does not imply that faith's object is known in the way that we know empirical facts. Rather, Hooker describes a knowing in which Christ's person becomes intelligible to us in spite of the limits of reason. Such knowing is born of Christ's downward action in the forms of revelation and the Spirit's gift of the supernatural virtue of faith by which such revelation is rendered intelligible:

> That which is true and neither can be discerned by sense, nor concluded by some natural principles, must have principles of revealed truth whereupon to build itself, and an habit of faith in us wherewith principles of that kind are apprehended. The mysteries of our religion are above the reach of our understanding, above discourse of man's reason, above all that any creature can comprehend. Therefore the first thing required of him which standeth for admission into Christ's family is belief. Which belief consisteth not so much in knowledge as in acknowledgement of all things that heavenly wisdom revealeth; the affection of faith is above her reach, her love to Godward above the comprehension which she hath of God.[557]

Similarly, our encounter with Christ during the Eucharist is best described with the grammar of the logical space of reasons.

Hooker locates the real presence of Christ not in the sacrament but "in the worthy receiver of the sacrament;"[558] "the bread is his body and or the cup his blood but only in the very heart and soul of him which receiveth them.[559] Moreover, Hooker unequivocally maintains that Christ is efficaciously present. Indeed, Christ's real

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555. *Learned Discourse*.26; FLE 5:137.30-138.4
556. *Laws*.V.63.2; 2:291.19-21.
557. *Laws*.V.63.1; 2:290.20-31
558. *Laws*.V.67.5;2:334.30-32.
559. *Laws*.V.67.6;2:335.3-6.

presence in the heart and soul of the receiver, triggered by the sign of Christ's promise to be Christ-with-us, renders an ontological change in the receiver like that rendered in the bread and wine by virtue of their selection as the ordinary objects which trigger the edifying effects in the worthy receiver. What the receiver *is* - her ontology - is transformed by the real presence of Christ within her heart and soul such that her being is altered: Christ causes "a true change both of soul and body, an alteration from death to life."[560] This echoes Luther. Christ dwells within, and such presence constitutes both reconciliation (*favor*) and the gift of God himself (*donum*). In short, the real presence of Christ within the worthy receiver transforms her such that she herself becomes a sign of Christ's real and sanctifying presence in the community.

From this it should be clear that Hooker is a long way from the memorialism of Zwingli. To say that we experience the real presence of Christ according to the rationality principle, and to clarify that Hooker's instrumentalism is of the 'triggering' form, is not to say that Hooker believes that the sacrament merely triggers the recollection of Christ in our imagination. To the contrary, Hooker denies this, emphasizing that the sacrament induces a personal knowing:

> ... not by surmised imagination but truly, even so truly that through faith we perceive in the body and blood *sacramentally presented* the very taste of eternal life, the grace of the sacrament is here as the food which we eat and drink.[561]

In short, the sign of Christ's new covenant of grace renders intelligible to us Christ's real presence such that we are justified in our belief that he addresses us with his promise in the sacramental food and drink. Moreover, such personal knowing of Christ's presence renders intelligible to us "what the grace is which God giveth us, the degrees of our own increase in holiness and virtue..., [and] the strength of our life begun in Christ.[562]"

We encounter here the mystery. The surprising thing is that it is located neither

560. *Laws*.V..67.11; 2:339.7-340.1. Emphasis added.
561. *Laws*.V.67.1; 2:331.13-16. Emphasis added.
562. *Laws*.V.67.1; 2:331.9-12.

in the transformed properties of the bread and the wine nor the spiritual transport of the people to heaven. Instead, the mystery is in the 'mystical conjunction' that the Spirit causes in the human person. The eternal is naturally unknowable by humans because of our finitude - and because of the astigmatism of sin[563] - but nonetheless the Spirit crosses the buffer zone, re-creating a personal knowing of the unknowable by binding the covenant of grace to ordinary phenomena like bread and wine. How does the Spirit do that? How does the Spirit communicate knowledge of Christ's reconciling actions to our rational faculties such that they become intelligible as actions toward us and for us? How does the Spirit create Christ's Indwelling Presence such that we experience ourselves as addressed personally by Christ's love? Therein lies the mystery.

Yet it is clear that, for Hooker, our participation in Christ and his participation in us - by way of sacramental practices - occurs in what I have described as the logical space of reasons. In the Eucharist, Christ's history becomes our history, we discover ourselves addressed by him from both his throne and his cross, and we discover ourselves transformed by his action upon us. For:

> ... these mysteries do as nails fasten us to his very cross, that by them we draw out, as touching efficacy, force, and virtue, even the blood of his gored side, in the wounds of our Redeemer we there dip our tongues, we are died red both within and without, our hunger is satisfied and our thirst forever quenched, they are things wonderful which he feeleth, great which he seeth and unheard of which he uttereth whose soul is possessed of this paschal lamb and made joyful in the strength of this new wine, this bread hath in it more than the substance which our eyes behold, this cup hallowed with solemn benediction availeth to the endless life and welfare both of soul and body, in that it serveth as well for a medicine to heal our infirmities and purge our sins as for a sacrifice of thanksgiving, with touching it sanctifieth, it enlightneth with belief, it truly conformeth us unto the image of Jesus Christ; what these elements are in themselves it skilleth not, it is enough that to me which takes them they are the body and blood of Christ, his promise in witness hereof sufficeth, his word he knoweth which way to accomplish.[564]

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563. "Astigmatism" is Steinmetz's metaphor for Calvin's account of sin, which I borrow and apply to Hooker. See note 124, page 53. Like Calvin, Hooker described the noetic effects of sin in cognitive terms. Our "natural thirst for knowledge" is frustrated by ignorance, for the good we seek "hath evidence enough for itself, if reason were diligent to search it out." But communal "neglect" of the good causes "a show of that which is not," and we choose that which is "less good." Sometimes, in our choices, we are deceived by Satan; "sometimes the hastiness of our wills prevent[ ] the more considerate advice of sound reason," and "sometimes the very custom of evil make[s] the heart obdurate against whatsoever instructions to the contrary." See *Laws* I.7.7; I.8.11.

564. *Laws*.V.67.13; 2:343.5-24.

Section summary

Thus far, an account of our participation in Christ especially as it is mediated through the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist. We have seen that Christ's Spirit uses ordinary water, bread, and wine as instrumental causes of the effect of Christ's real presence in us. As Hooker observes, it is we who are transubstantiated, not the elements themselves. The final cause is not transformed bread and wine but transformed humanity, and our encounter with such transformed subjects is known by us in the logical space of reasons. The key point is that the practices themselves are not containers or channels of Christ's real presence, but triggers through which the Spirit efficaciously draws us by steps and degrees into an ever-deepening personal fellowship with Christ.

Mimetic virtue

Improvisation

In their *Christian Ethics*,[565] Stanley Hauerwas and Sam Wells argue that ethical reasoning for the church is properly done as worship, and that a proper Christian ethics is rightly determined by our worship. Their volume follows Wells' argument that every act in the Eucharist and baptism performs a fundamental truth-claim of the Gospel, forming the mind of Christ in disciples through the repetition of practices instituted by Christ. Of particular interest to this study is the insight, upon which their approach is based, that practices produce a virtuous community by causing disciples to take the right things for granted. The way the Church identifies those 'right things' it should take for granted is by reference to Christ himself.

I would clarify, however, that it is not the practices themselves that teach us the right things to take for granted, and it is not the practices that correct our vision so that we see the world the way it really is, but rather it is Christ himself. Virtue is born

565. Hauerwas and Wells, *Christian Ethics*.

not of practices but of a personal rationality. As we have seen, practices actualize and sustain the personal relationship through which Christ's history becomes our history. In that personal relationship, we discover ourselves addressed by him, and we discover ourselves transformed by his action upon us.

But, if this is correct, how does Christ teach us the proper descriptions of the world? How does Christ himself teach us the right things to take for granted? How are we ourselves agents?

In his *Improvisation*, Wells draws upon the language of the theatre to emphasize that Christian ethics are necessarily dramatic. They do not merely require the ability to make aesthetic judgments. They require such judgments in a context of interpersonal address and response such that those judgments keep the story going. The particularity and contingency of human life require that Christian agents improvise in response to particular ethical questions such that their responses carry on in the same way towards the New Jerusalem. Such improvisation is art, and, as Aristotle, Aquinas, and Hooker taught us, the art of making phronetic judgments is learned only at the feet of masters.

But from whom does one learn such an art? In what follows, I will propose that sacramental practices generate the personal relationship with Christ that sets the necessary conditions for our imitation of him which, in turn, motivates right motivations. Before proceeding to that proposal, however, some background is necessary.

Mimesis

Linda Zagzebski's 'divine motivation theory'[566] provides a way forward.

Most distinctively Christian ethics seem to be deontological in that they presuppose a 'divine command theory' which characterize ethics in terms of obedience

566. Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, *Divine Motivation Theory*, Kindle ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2004-08-02).

to divine law that is grounded in the creation accounts. Zagzebski has proposed an alternative - which she dubs 'divine motivation theory - which is grounded in Christology and which explains the formation of virtue in terms of the formation of *motives* corresponding to those of Christ. We learn virtuous behavior by looking to moral exemplars, and that virtuous behavior we observe is constituted by appropriate motive dispositions and corresponding actions that we can imitate.[567]

For the purposes of this study, I am chiefly interested in Zagzebski's account of how the imitation of moral exemplars - including Christ - motivate right actions. In what follows, I will argue that the Spirit generates the personal relationship with Christ that sets the necessary conditions for such imitation through sacramental practices.

According to Linda Zagzebski, virtue is formed through the creation of perceptions that are both affective and cognitive and acquired through experience.[568] Zagzebski calls these perceptions emotions. Repetitive encounters with situations and/or objects lead us to create "affective dispositions," and, in combination with our efforts to create mental maps of our world, these dispositions lead to the development of "thick concepts" which result in patterns of emotional responses to similar stimuli. Virtue arises from the creation of the right thick concepts which, in turn, motivate right actions.[569]

Zagzebski turns to the concept of "moral exemplar" in order to provide a foundation for her theory.[570] The right emotional response to a given situation/object is that response which one might observe in the moral exemplar in similar circumstances. The actions that correspond to particular emotions are those actions which one might observe when the moral exemplar has those emotions. We know what virtuous behavior is by looking to moral exemplars, and that virtuous behavior

567. Ibid., 219. "Good motives for us are forms of imitating the divine motives."
568. Ibid., 64-66.
569. Ibid., 64-65.
570. Ibid., 48-49.

we observe is constituted by appropriate motive dispositions and corresponding actions that we can imitate.

For Zagbeski, virtue is an embedded habit humans develop by imitating moral exemplars. The supreme exemplar Zagbeski has in view is the Christ.[571] However, we should not expect other humans to share perfectly his emotions, his responses, and his ends precisely because of the incommunicability of humans: there is something in particular that is of value in each human beyond that which is attributable to human nature. Because of this particularity, virtue does not consist of being a perfect imitator of the exemplar. The difference that makes us unique means that virtue necessarily does not consist of conformance to a uniquely appropriate emotion, response, or end that we observe in Christ, but rather describes *a range of fitting emotions, responses, and ends*, all of which describe a range of ideal selves. Though the Christ defines the ideal range of virtuous motives and actions, divine motivation theory insists on the particularity of this ideal for each individual.

This insistence on the particularity of individuals even as they seek to imitate Christ illumines the significance of narrative in ethical formation. Narrative exposes humans to the emotions, responses, and ends of Christ and those who followed Christ well, offering not just the supreme exemplar, but a rich variety of exemplars whose story is one of imitating the Christ well. In our encounter with their engagement of the world as mediated through narrative of which understand ourselves to be a part, we form those thick concepts that lead to motive dispositions, and thereby learn how to respond within the range of ideal emotions and actions to the stimuli of our contexts.

Sacramental practices and right motivations

Zagzebski's account of affective dispositions which lead to the development of "thick concepts" intersects well with Wells' emphasis on practices which lead us to

571. Ibid., 226.

take the right things for granted. Both emphasize the significance of repetitive encounters, as well as the creation of mental maps or descriptions that help us to see the world rightly. And both point to how these thick concepts help us to navigate ethically in the encounter with unfamiliar stimuli.

As noted above, it is not practices but Christ's action upon us through practices which lead us to take the right things for granted. Moreover, we have seen that Christ acts upon on us through sacramental practices to initiate and sustain the personal relationships through which Christ's Spirit sanctifies us. But what is the relationship between these things? How does Christ utilize sacramental practices to provide the gift of the right thick concepts through which we take the right things for granted?

My proposal is that the personal relationship created through sacramental practices provides the necessary pre-conditions for the mimesis through which Christ schools us. The relationship in which one experiences being addressed by Christ and responds to Christ grows over time. Interactions accumulate, and one grows in one's appreciation of a shared history. One consequence of this personal relationship is a knowing of Christ such that his nature and will are rendered intelligible in the sense of producing justifiable belief in Christ as one's Lord. This justifiable belief, made possible only through the personal relationship with him, establishes the roles of exemplar and disciple described by Zagzebski. These are the necessary pre-conditions for mimesis.

To be clear, Christ is the supreme exemplar, but we encounter not just Christ, but also the phenomena of others who have imitated and are imitating Christ. The community in Christ properly provides a rich variety of exemplars whose story is one of imitating Christ well.

From this we see that through the sacraments and through the community that the sacraments create, Christ schools us as we are immersed in his story such that it becomes our story, or, rather, such that we begin to see ourselves as part of his story. Even better, as Wells might say, Christ sanctifies us as we see ourselves as actors in

the theodrama, called to improvise responsibly in such a way that our actions point to the New Jerusalem. Through our imitation of him, he creates our "affective dispositions" and, ultimately, our mental maps of the world that correct our vision so that, over time, we see the world as it really is. By steps and degrees, Christ develops in us the thick concepts which determine our improvisational responses to the contingent and variegated stimuli of life. Virtue arises from the creation of the right thick concepts which, in turn, motivate right actions. In this way, Christ utilizes sacramental practices to generate virtue in the body of which he is the head.

Knowing God and Recognizing the Good, Revisited

So how do humans recognize the good? We've seen that, for Hooker, the entire created order is God's symphony of truth,[572] communicating God's Word by which all things come to know who and what they are in God's mind. Hooker could say today, with Hans Urs von Balthasar, that "Although ever since Luther we have become accustomed to call the Bible 'God's Word', it is not Sacred Scripture which is God's original language and self-expression, but rather Jesus Christ."[573] In Hooker's rendering, that language and self-expression is the eternal law, which is perfectly transmitted but imperfectly received by the human rational agent, who then weaves that Word into the community's common life through law, community norms, social structures, and shared practices. The Spirit gathers particular individuals into Christ's Church, drawing them into personal relationships with Jesus Christ through which Christ tutors them mimetically in the pentecostal grammar which heals and empowers their relational capacities, and generates the norms, structures, and practices through which the Church hears and embodies the Word. Yet, whether Christians recognize the Word in Scripture, communal practices, the created order, or in the spiritual experiences through which we receive our conjunction with Christ, and whether we

572. I allude here to von Balthasar's phrase, which I take to be an apt description that Hooker could have adopted himself. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Truth is Symphonic: Aspects of Christian Pluralism*, ed.:28 (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987). 7-10.

573. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord, Vol. 1: Seeing the Form (the Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics)* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009-06-01). 23.

conceptualize our encounters with it in terms of causes or reasons, all human knowing of the good is derived from the phenomenal. This includes the special category of revelation, which transcends human reason but is nonetheless encountered as phenomena perceived using the same human psychology. As we have seen throughout this study, this psychology has important implications for the defeasability of our communal judgments about the good, and the methods of ethical reasoning we embrace.

Extension through synthesis with Wellsian improvisation and Zagbeski's divine motivation theory locates the Hookerian account squarely in the ecclesial ethicists' camp. It clarifies what I suggest Hooker himself understood: that the proper focus of Christian ethics is neither 'decisions' nor 'power' nor "right actions" nor "right outcomes" nor abstract values like equality. Rather, the proper focus of Christian ethics is the "character" of the Christian.[574]

It also highlights the ethical significance of another thread we've seen throughout this study - Hooker's priority on the particular. For with Barth, Hauerwas, Wells, and other ecclesial ethicists, Hooker resists reduction of Christ to either an Enlightenment sage dispensing wisdom or to a new Moses figure dictating universal moral axioms. Rather, the Hookerian account sees the Christ as the self-expression of the triune God, calling humans to the abundance of love unleashed when we imitate the divine fellowship by living as one with the other without annihilating difference. Christ calls us to imitate his always creative dispositions, but not by ceasing to be individuals called by name. Because Christ is always wholly other, he calls us to imitate his dispositions in our unique narrative location, participating in the rationality of God by creatively manifesting the good he teaches us to desire. This returns us once more to the virtue of *phronesis*, the capacity to manifest the good for the sake of the good. In the Hookerian account, Christian virtue just is *phronesis*, reconfigured as the

574. Per the Wellsian typology of ethical systems, universal ethics focus on decisions, subversive ethics focus on power relationships, and ecclesial ethics focus on character. Wells and Quash, *Introducing Christian Ethics*, 113-115.

capacity to create in our narrative location the good that we desire precisely because the risen Lord himself desires it.

Criticism of the Ecclesial Ethicists

We've reached at last a preliminary answer to the question of how the mind of Christ is formed in community, and we've seen that the Hookerian account answers in terms of mimetic virtue that is cultivated by the Spirit in the Church's practices. Because the Hookerian account emphasizes the importance of practices, it is vulnerable to criticism aimed originally at ecclesial ethicists who emphasize narrative and practices. Critics of ecclesial ethicists have focused on four core concerns: their reluctance to make explicit claims about God and creation and a correlative tendency to identify the Church with its social ethics, the conflation of truth with the faith or beliefs of a particular community, and an overly-realized eschatology that leads to an irresponsible sectarianism. Related to these concerns are complaints that those who emphasize practices don't attend closely to the specific words of Scripture and that they give insufficient attention to particular Christian doctrines. Criticism is widespread and centered mostly around the work of Hauerwas due perhaps to the prominence of his corpus. Critiques by John Webster and Christopher Insole are illustrative of these concerns. In the remainder of this chapter, I will summarize their critiques and consider how the Hookerian account answers them.

John Webster's Barthian Critique

For John Webster,[575] the ecclesial ethicists err to the extent that their description of the Church is based on what the Church does (its practices) rather than on what the Church suffers (God's actions upon the Church). In their insistence that the visible Church not be separated from its language and practices, those who emphasize practices are vulnerable to the charge that they are identifying the phenomena of the

575. John Webster, "The Church and the Perfection of God," in *The Community of the Word: Toward an Evangelical Ecclesiology*, ed. Mark Husbands and Daniel J. Treier, (IVP Academic, 2005-03-18), Kindle location 856-864, Sec. 1, para. 4.

Church with the revelation of God's reign. Due to their reluctance to speak about first principles - and especially the "perfection of God," their account of the Church is excessively immanentist and reflects an overly realized eschatology.

While acknowledging the importance of the effort to reintegrate theology with the concrete life of the Church after decades of the "ecclesiological minimalism of much modern Protestantism," Webster criticizes the efforts of post-liberals for "ecclesiological inflation". Webster notes three consequences of the description of the Church in terms of its practices, all of which he summarizes as a distortion of the "asymmetry of gospel and church." The first consequence is an "immanentist account of the Church which lacks strong interest in deploying direct language about God." The second consequence is an overemphasis on the Church "as visible human communion,"[576] an emphasis that he rightly notes is particularly strong in the Anglican Communion currently. The third consequence is the relegation of the Gospel to mere background, offering "little critical or corrective force upon the way in which Church practice is conceived." Webster's concerns can best be summarized by his pithy and ironic description of this school: "In short: Schleiermacher, not Barth."[577]

Webster's criticisms seemingly arise from two helpful Barthian concerns. First, ecclesiology must flow from proper confession of the alterity and perfection of the triune Word. Second, "the norm of ecclesiology" must be "the particular character of God as it is made known in revelation, rather than some common term in ecclesiology and theology proper (such as the term *relation*, which is almost ubiquitous in contemporary discussion)."[578] The consequences that worry him issue from these concerns. My Hookerian account shares Webster's Barthian concerns and seems to meet his critique successfully.

We've already seen that Hooker explicitly satisfies the two overarching concerns

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576. John Webster, "The Visible Attests the Invisible," in *The Community of the Word: Toward an Evangelical Ecclesiology*, ed. Mark Husbands and Daniel J. Treier, (IVP Academic, 2005-03-18), Kindle location 1149-1159, Sect. 1, para. 4.
577. Ibid.
578. Webster, "The Church and the Perfection of God," Kindle location 880, Sect. II, para. 1.

from which Webster's portents derive. In his appropriation of Thomas' description of the eternal law, Hooker takes care to emphasize the alterity of the Trinity by conceiving it in a first and second form. Furthermore, Hooker himself echoes Webster's concern that ecclesiology be grounded in the perfection of God: "the being of God is a kind of law to his working: for that perfection which God is, giveth perfection to that he doth."[579] Hooker's argument begins where Webster would have it begin - the extraordinary superabundance of the triune God:

> The general end of God's external working is the exercise of his most glorious and most abundant virtue: which abundance doth show itself in variety, and for that cause this variety is oftentimes in Scripture expressed by the name of *riches*.[580]

Similarly, we saw that the eternal law, for Hooker, is none other than the humiliated and exalted Christ. Christ is the eternal law, the Governor, Sustainer, and Reconciler of creation. Already we've seen that ecclesial laws have their source and standard in the eternal law, and thus in Christ. Humans come to know "the particular character of God as it is made known in revelation"[581] through the Spirit's cultivation of personal relationships with Christ. Clearly, the Hookerian account satisfies Webster's second concern.

Webster's worries about "an immanentist account of the Church" and his concern that an emphasis on practices will lead to an overemphasis on the Church "as visible human communion" are both related to Webster's encounter with ecclesiologies that are insufficiently pneumatological.[582] We would expect from the foregoing that Hooker easily satisfies this concern, and that is correct. Webster's insistence that a focus on practices not lead us to lose sight of the invisible church is worth pondering, however, for it helps to make explicit that which has been merely implicit in the Hookerian account developed thus far.

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579. *Laws*.I.2.2; I.59.5-6.
580. *Laws*.I.2.4; 1.61.6-9. Emphasis original.
581. Ibid.
582. Webster, "The Visible Attests the Invisible," Kindle location 1145, Sect.1, para 5.

First, the current account satisfies Webster's concern by explaining how the Spirit generates the personal relationships with Christ that cause the common confession that constitutes the Church. Hooker cautions us regarding the invisibility of those so reconciled. We are unable "to show any cause why mercy may not do good where it will, and wheresover it will justice withhold good."[583] We can speak of those who are eternally elect, temporally obdurate, and eternally reprobate, but we are unable to sort ourselves into those categories here and now, for we don't know if, when, or how the Spirit may bear fruit (Matt 25:31-44).

This leads to a profound consequence for ethics and ecclesiology. As David Neelands notes, for Hooker, "there is no effective or practical difference, just as there is not perceptible difference, between the visible and invisible church, except at the end, when it shall be clear if there be any in the church who do not persevere."[584] If there is no *practical* difference between the visible and the invisible church until the fulfillment of time, then, when theology speaks of a right ordering of the church, the practical assumption must be that we are all equal in our status before God. That is, we must assume that *all* are elect, and that our use of categories like godly and ungodly are presumptuous because their contents are known only to God, and premature because time is not yet fulfilled. Therefore, in ordering the church politically, we rightly begin with an assumption of equality in its members:[585]

> Howbeit concerning the state of all men with whom we live (for only of them our prayers are meant) we may till the worlds end, for the present, always presume, that as far as in us there is power to discern what others are, and as far as any duty of ours dependeth upon the notice of their condition in respect of God, the safest axioms for charity to rest itself upon are these, "He which already believeth is;" and "He which believeth not as yet may be the child of God." It becometh not us during life altogether to condemn any man seeing that (for anything we

583. *Dublin*.43; 4.161.26-28.
584. Neelands, "Hooker on the Visible and Invisable Church," 109.
585. This may seem a commonplace to contemporary ears that may be accustomed to Eucharistic prayers which proclaim that Christ is the "Savior and Redeemer of the world", "a perfect sacrifice for the whole world" sent "to bring to fulfillment the sanctification of all." These are, respectively, phrases from Eucharistic prayers A, B, and D of the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Episcopal Church. But the division of the world into the godly and the ungodly, and the instinct to exclude the ungodly from the church, are perennial weeds in the history of Protestantism, and were among the priorities of Hooker's opponents.

know) there is hope of every man's forgiveness the possibility of whose repentance is not yet cut off by death.[586]

This pragmatic emphasis on the visible church, combined with Hooker's high pneumatology, leads to Hooker's remarkable and pithy definition of the Church as "that visible mystical body."[587] Hooker refuses to identify the Church either as the community whose liturgical practices are visible to the world or as the invisible multitude whose circumcised hearts are visible only to God (Rom. 2.29). For Hooker, precisely because Christ is really present in the Church's worship, the visible liturgical practices unite all the elect translocally and transhistorically into a "society supernatural"[588] that is simultaneously empirical and non-empirical. The body of Christ is always visible and mystical.[589]

This defends the current account from charges of excessive immanentism. But it also returns a suggestion to Webster and other Barthians. The Hookerian account of the Church - as the people visibly, translocally, and transhistorically gathered by the Spirit and governed by Christ the Eternal Law - maps nicely to Barth's account of the Church as the people liberated at the intersection of autonomy, heteronomy, and theonomy. As Woodard-Lehman observes in discussing Barth's account of revelation, "Theonomy in itself is inert. Apart from its immanent heteronomous correlates, God's Word would be mute. God's command would be silent."[590] On this Hooker and Barth agree: it is proper for theology to emphasize the ecclesial practices by which the Word is made visible. for without such visibility, "God's Word would be mute."[591]

Webster expresses concern that those who emphasize ecclesial practices give insufficient attention to first principles about God, creation, and to Scripture. The Hookerian account, however, is derived from first principles, beginning with the

586. *Laws*.V.49.2; 2:203.15-25.
587. *Laws*.24.1; 2:111.24-27.
588. *Laws*.I.15.2; 1:131.11
589. Shuger, ""Societie Supernaturall"," 320.
590. Woodard-Lehman, "Freedom and Authority," 187.
591. Hooker and Barth differ, of course, in the priority they assign sacramental practice.

doctrine of the perfection of God, as Webster commends, and describing creation, as Aquinas did, in terms of the eternal law. Hooker defends Scripture reading and proclamation as essential ecclesial practices. Scripture is necessarily a primary focus of the Hookerian account because the written Word is our most reliable testimony to the incarnate Word. Immersion in Scripture generates the iterative encounters with Jesus Christ by which the disciple develops the shared sociality of a personal relationship through which Christ's dispositions are revealed. Webster's criticism on this count is unfounded. A Hookerian emphasis on ecclesial practices presupposes that disciples are bathed daily in Scripture.

Christopher Insole's Wittgensteinian Critique

In a critique of Hauerwas,[592] Christopher Insole raises similar concerns about the reluctance of ecclesial ethicists to ground their critique of liberalism in theological first principles. Like Webster, he concludes that their account of the Church is excessively immanentist, constructivist, and suffering from the very Enlightenment epistemology that it is their aim to critique. For Insole, those who emphasize practices in speaking of truth (and, therefore, virtue) are vulnerable to the criticism that they misappropriate Wittgenstein's understanding of practices. In order to 'bury skepticism' they claim that truth is accessible to us through the observation of a community's practices. Insole offers a challenge to the ecclesial ethicists centered on two common interpretations of Wittgenstein's use of the word 'practice.' If, by practices, one refers to replicable processes that are communicable, then Insole has no concern, for such an understanding is what Wittgenstein had in mind. However, if, by practices, one refers to the activities of an actual community, and claims that the beliefs of that community are constituted by their practices, then one succumbs to the folly of the empiricists whom one seeks to correct. Meaning is not constituted by our practices, but rather is manifested in them. We can observe what a community

592. Christopher Insole, "The Truth Behind Practices: Wittgenstein, Robinson Crusoe and Ecclesiology," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 20.3, (2007): 364-382.

believes by attending to their practices, but the practices themselves do not constitute meaning immanently. Beliefs are prior to practices.[593]

Moreover, we must always mind the gap between truth and beliefs that arises from our finitude, and thus not identify truth with practices. To claim an identity of a community's practices with truth is to claim an identity of a particular community's beliefs with truth, which is to presuppose privileged access of that community to truth which is inaccessible to those outside the community. That means that practices are therefore inherently incommunicable. An account of virtue based on knowledge of God that is inherently incommunicable results in an account of the Church that is constructivist and sectarian. Accordingly, Insole sees in the work of Stanley Hauerwas (in particular) an emphasis on practices that is "sceptically-driven, constructivist and empiricist"[594] to the extent that Hauerwas' emphases on practices are received as an implicit claim that the Church's practices constitute Christian truth and community.

Insole's philosophical critique is especially relevant because he gestures plausibly toward a cause of divisions within the Church. He helpfully reminds us that our speech about ecclesial practices attends carefully to the criterion of communicability across the boundaries of actual communities or else it risks contributing to our fragmentation. I am in full sympathy with Insole's concerns, but I think some nuance is needed. I also think he misreads Hauerwas. Finally, the Hookerian account satisfies his concerns.

These conclusions are best seen when we substitute Jeffrey Stout's language of 'commitments' in lieu of Insole's word, 'beliefs.' Following Robert Brandom, Stout differentiates between doxastic or cognitive commitments and practical commitments. "Cognitive commitments are commitments to a claim or a judgment, whereas practical commitments are commitments to act."[595] "Ought-to-do

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593. Ibid., 373-374.
594. Ibid., 377.
595. Jeffrey Stout, *Democracy and Tradition (New Forum Books)* (Princeton University Press, 2005-07-05), 211.

judgments... make explicit a commitment to the material soundness of a practical inference."[596] I take Stout's cognitive commitments to be the subject matter of the virtue of *episteme*, and practical commitments to be the subject matter of the virtue of *phronesis*. With these substitutions, I agree with Insole that the cognitive commitments of a community are not constituted by its practices. Both cognitive and practical commitments are prior to practices. Practices instead *manifest* both kinds of commitments. So far, so good. The Hookerian account satisfies Insole's concern.

But the preceding account of practices shows that, importantly, practices do not *merely* manifest our commitments. By observing our actions, others can and do make inferences about the cognitive and practical commitments that motivate our actions.[597] We have seen that successive encounters with others lead us to create inferentially our own cognitive commitments regarding the dispositions of those we encounter, and our own practical commitments regarding those dispositions we will or will not imitate.[598] As we participate in practices, certain persons are recognized as entitled to "discursive authority and responsibility" which lead us to recognize their commitments as authoritative for ourselves.[599] The Hookerian account names these authorities *exemplars* and names Jesus as the supreme exemplar. So practices don't constitute commitments, but practices do reveal both cognitive and practical commitments, and, because ecclesial practices are social practices, the commitments our practices manifest, in turn, generate new cognitive and practical commitments within our social circles. Commitments are prior to practices, but practices dialectically shape both cognitive and practical commitments and thereby generate the unity and diversity that mediates the mind of Christ. *Lex credendi, lex orandi, lex vivendi*.

Insole also warns against identifying a concrete community's practices with truth. Following Hooker's ontology, I understand Insole's reference to the concept, truth, to

596. Ibid., 210.
597. Ibid.
598. See "Mimesis" on page 187.
599. Ibid.

be about fulfillment of a thing's *telos*. Truth is a thing's proper becoming. Cognitive commitments are commitments to claims about a thing's proper becoming or judgments about whether certain actions manifest a thing's proper becoming. When Insole cautions us not to identify an actual community's practices with truth, I do not take him to be expressing an epistemological skepticism; that is, I do not take him to be insisting that a fundamental reality stands beyond ordinary experience. Rather, I take him to be reminding us of the probablistic error inherent in our reasoning as a consequence of both creaturely finitude and sin. The Hookerian account agrees. "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face" (1 Cor 13:12). But Insole presses further. On his account, such an identification signals the assumption of privileged access to meaning by that concrete community, renders its practices inherently incommunicable and thus unintelligible to those outside that community, and therefore renders its claims about them "constructivist and sectarian."[600]

Insole's warning that ecclesial ethicists' focus on practices can become sectarian is worth probing. Insole judges claims and judgments as incommunicable if and only if one cannot justify them across the boundaries of concrete communities. The problem is the claim of privileged access - the appeal to an authority whose credibility cannot be accessed by those outside the community. For example, Insole sees Hauerwasian emphasis on practices as constructivist and sectarian to the extent that Hauerwas claims that Christian practices should diverge from the world's practices because Christians have privileged access to the source of all truth. My interest here is in Insole's implication that a claim of unique access to authority necessarily leads to sectarianism. That's important because the Hookerian account, like Hauerwas *et al*, makes such a claim. As we saw in chapter four, there are those whose participation in Christ is merely ontological - the participation of an effect in its cause, and there are those who recognize they are addressed by Christ and respond with cognitive and practical commitments that reflect their recognition of him as Lord.[601] Is the

600. Insole, "The Truth Behind Practices," 376-378.
601. See "Communion with Christ" on page 146.

Hookerian account sectarian?

Wittgenstein himself, upon whom Insole bases his critique, seems to suggest that there are certain claims for which linguistic communities require no justification and for which they take no challenge seriously. John Bowlin reminds us of Wittgenstein's left foot:

> 360. I know that this is my foot. I could not accept any experience as proof to the contrary. - That may be an exclamation; but what follows from it? At least that I shall act with a certainty that knows no doubt, in accordance with my belief.[602]

There are certain claims that are communicable simply because they belong to the set of "judgments about the goodness of certain ends and about the truth of certain propositions" that "mark the outer boundary of rational speech and human conduct."[603] They require no justification because they "specify... and generate our most basic linguistic practices."[604] Bowlin explains:

> If language cannot be used without accepting certain judgements on authority, judgements that give our concepts substance, then we can assert no principle of credibility that escapes this dependence upon trust. At best, such a principle could do no more than point out that as language-using creatures we must take certain judgements for true (*On Certainty*, §§191, 205-6). Nature requires no less.[605]

"God has taught me that this is my left foot."[606] Certain actions that need no justification ensue from God's authoritative teaching that this is my left foot. I will walk with a certainty that this is my left foot. "God has taught me that Christ is Creator, Sustainer, and Reconciler of the world." Certain actions that need no justification ensue from God's authoritative teaching that Jesus is Lord and Redeemer. From their moment of doxastic causality, "Christians can rightly claim that to bear the

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602. Ludwig. Wittgenstein, *On Certainty / Uber Gewissheit*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe and Denis Paul Wittgenstein (Basil Blackwell, 1969). in John R. Bowlin, "Nature's Grace: Aquinas and Wittgenstein on Natural Law and Moral Knowledge," in *Grammar and Grace: Reformulations of Aquinas and Wittgenstein,* ed. Jeffrey Stout and Robert MacSwain, (London: SCM Press, 2004), 165.
603. Ibid., 164.
604. Ibid.
605. Ibid., 167.
606. Ibid.

cross is not a confession peculiar to them; rather their lives reveal the "grain of the universe."[607] The Hookerian account, which claims that all created things encounter and are governed by the eternal law that is the Word, agrees that the most fundamental Christian commitment is that when we follow Jesus Christ, we align ourselves with the grain of the universe. That cognitive claim generates Christian linguistic practice.

But is it a sectarian claim? I think not. The Hookerian account gives a positive account of pagan virtue precisely because it does not claim that the Church has *privileged* access to Christ. All created things encounter Christ's universal address. Human faculties remain apt in spite of the Fall, "and a will thereby framable to good things."[608] The distinction between Church and world is not that of *ontological* access but of *noetic* access. Those whose noetic access to Christ's universal address empower them to recognize Christ as Lord are differently accountable, for their noetic access communicates Christ's command that they live in such a way that they proclaim Christ's Lordship in the world. All encounter Christ's authoritative Word, but some are sent with trumpets as its heralds. It is not a matter of ontological but noetic access. It is not a matter of Church and world as two distinctive linguistic communities. It is a matter of Israel's vocation to be a herald of the world Christ's Word re-creates (John 20:21-22; Cf. Gen. 2:7).

Perhaps the distinction between ontological and noetic access is the key to understanding Hauerwas' refrain that the task of the Church is to be the Church. I take that refrain to signal Hauerwas' premise that, with his incarnation, Christ has ushered in a new humanity. Christ has redeemed the world, and that changes all things. In his humiliation and exaltation, the risen Christ proclaims a new covenant, and the Spirit summons all humans into Christ's new covenantal community whose members the Spirit equips with an enflamed pentecostal tongue so that the body of

607. Hauerwas, *With the Grain of the Universe*, 224.
608. *Dublin* 2; 4:103.19-21.

Christ proclaims the Word within and across time. Certain cognitive and practical commitments are communicable simply because cross and resurrection mark the outer boundaries of rational speech within the world Christ has redeemed. The task of the Church is to manifest the commitments proper to this re-created and redeemed world.

Stout's distinction between cognitive and practical commitments help to clarify why it is difficult to sustain charges of sectarianism when applied to ecclesial ethicists like Hauerwas (and the current Hookerian account). Just as the Hookerian account developed thus far emphasizes the alterity of God, Hauerwas, with his Barthian Christology, maintains the conceptual gap between the Word and human commitments that denote it. As Webster complains, those who emphasize practices devote relatively little time to describing fundamental cognitive commitments at all. Their focus is on the practical inferences and commitments that logically follow such cognitive claims. But Hauerwas does not, as Insole worries, identify truth with the practices of an actual community. Rather, he dialectically engages others within the Church regarding what its ought-to-do judgments and *practical* commitments ought to be *given* the cognitive commitments that generate its most basic linguistic practices.

This is how I understand Hauerwas and Wells, who, in their *Christian Ethics,* propose constructively that the Eucharist is "a corporate practice for discerning the good."[609] They do not propose a new foundationalism. Rather, Hauerwas and Wells invite the Church to reflect dialectically on what our concrete practical commitments should be given the cognitive commitments that generate the most basic linguistic practice of the Church - the Eucharist. They point the Church, in other words, to the virtue of *phronesis*. Ethical reasoning from principles mined from deconstruction of and reflection upon the Eucharist and other ecclesial practices is similar to ethical reasoning from principles mined from Scripture: such premises ought not be construed as self-authenticating, perspicuous, or objective. Ecclesial practices

609. Hauerwas and Wells, *Christian Ethics,* 9.

themselves are not a foundation; only Christ, who tutors us in our particularity, is.

Chapter Summary

So, thus far: Hooker defends ecclesial practices on the grounds that they are the means of grace by which Christ's Spirit sanctifies us. He derives an account of such practices grounded in first principles, beginning with reflection on the Trinity. Humans participate in Christ not through an innate capacity to know God through intellection of transcendentals, but through the personal relationship with Christ that the Spirit creates in the heart of the individual. Through sacramental practices, Christ's history becomes our history, we discover ourselves addressed by him in our narrative location, and we discover ourselves transformed by his action upon us. This transformation caused by the Spirit renders possible a personal relation in which disciples are mentored by Christ himself, enabled to see him as the ultimate exemplar.

By steps and degrees, disciples learn to take the right things for granted, and, imitating him, learn to improvise in their ethical actions so that they carry on in the same way as Christ and also in the same way as citizens of the eschatological New Jerusalem. The Spirit causes us to recognize that we are addressed by Christ the Reconciler, actualizes our personal relationship with him, leads us to respond justifiably to him as Lord, and ultimately generates the right 'thick concepts' that are productive of virtue.